

You Say We're Just Friends

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You Say We're Just Friends

by [seryters](#)

Summary

George has moments where he regrets letting Dream do what he does—usually when he watches Dream tug his clothes back on, getting ready to return to his girlfriend.

“I’ll be careful,” George says. A little white lie. Whether it’s meant for his friends or himself, George isn’t sure. “I’m always careful.”

George realizes that there are way too many problems that come with being in love with his best friend.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

“Really? Again, George?”

George rolls his eyes, popping the collar of his shirt. He knows what Alex is eyeing: the marks on his collar bones that are too prominent to be old. There’s obviously no need for him to answer because Alex’s questions are rhetorical and meant to mock George if anything, but George finds himself replying anyway.

“He was upset he lost his game,” George mumbles as he sits down, filling in the vacant seat next to his friend.

Alex gives him an unimpressed look and George adds, “It was a home game,” as if it’ll make anything better. It doesn’t. In fact, it makes things even worse because Alex starts staring at him and then looking around to see if anyone else is hearing the ridiculous nonsense George is spewing.

In George’s defense, he wasn’t going to do anything last night. He was going to watch the game, be a prideful student and a supportive friend, and simply leave afterwards. But the opponent team just *had* to score the final shot at the last second and take the win. This meant a very pissed off blond with a need to take out his frustration.

Preferably in the form of getting his dick wet.

Currently, their professor has yet to walk in and therefore, most of the students are loitering outside. It’s the perfect opportunity for Alex to interrogate George about something as scandalous as this. George is still against it, but he would rather humor the conversation now than later when there’s dozens of more spying ears.

“That’s it?” Alex asks, staring at George with bewildered eyes. “You’re just gonna let Dream fuck you everytime that happens?”

An uneasy panic settles on George’s face and he looks around cautiously, “Shut *up*, Alex.”

“No, don’t tell me to shush,” Alex scowls, lightly shoving George on the shoulder. “He has a girlfriend. Why can’t he pout his way between *her* legs instead of his best friend’s? And, for the record, best friends don’t usually have sex twenty-four seven, George. If they did, our friendship would be *very* uncomfortable for both of us.”

That’s true. Dream *did* have his girlfriend to fuck in compensation for losing a game that he was carrying single-handedly. However, Dream’s girlfriend is just as competitive as him. That means at the face of a loss, she took her little cheer team and disappeared before the cameras could roll in, leaving Dream to deal with the humiliation of a defeat by himself. That is until Dream spotted George in the bleachers, nodded his head in the direction of the school parking lot, and disappeared knowing George would follow.

George parts his lips in shock, a squeaky noise being all that he can manage for the first few seconds. “We don’t fuck twenty-four seven.”

Alex scoffs, twirling his pen around on his finger. “You might as well be.”

“It’s not like she’s not sleeping around with other people too,” George whispers, pulling out his notebook and flipping to a clean page. “I’m helping him get back at her because she started it. That’s all.”

Their professor finally arrives and with him comes a horde of students. Suddenly, George and Alex’s little corner is overcrowded with blurred faces that they see everyday, therefore no longer being a safespace. The conversation nears an end.

Alex rolls his eyes and then faces the front of the classroom, “Whatever you say, George.”

It starts up again during lunch.

George finds himself in the middle of a heated debate over *his* love life, lead by two of his closest friends: Karl and Alex. Alex is team “anti-Dream” and Karl is team “anti-Dream but sex is okay”. George doesn’t know how talking about history homework led up to this, but he learns to never to ask about the Peloponnesian War again. Not when you’re sitting between a law major and a film major.

“George has a right to revenge!” Karl exclaims, waving his arms in the air expressively. “She was such a bitch to him in highschool, remember?”

“Again?” Dream asked as he walked George to the nurse’s office for a change of clothes. The ones

George was wearing were drenched in some starbuck's drink he couldn't remember the name of, courtesy of Kira. "You have got to start standing up for yourself, Georgie."

"No energy," George lied, blinking away the tears that were collecting on his lower lash line. He felt like an idiot and looked like one too. "Too many of them."

Dream scoffed, shrugging off his jacket and wrapping it around George's shoulder. "You could have had a whole army if you would just trust that charm of yours."

"Charm," George repeated in disbelief. He tugged Dream's jacket a little tighter around his body when they passed by a group of nosy eyes. "I think you have the wrong person."

"No, I have the right person," Dream frowned, nudging George on the arm and getting the shorter boy to look up at him. Even with liquid drenching his shirt and dripping down his body, Dream's stare had made George feel enough warmth to be set for the upcoming winter. "Yeah. I definitely have the right person."

They arrived at the nurse's office shortly after that. Dream had pushed the door open for him and then shook his head when George offered him his jacket back, insisting that he keep it until the end of the day. Just in case they didn't have spare shirts which was unlikely but not impossible enough for George to dismiss.

If it weren't for Dream, George would have probably sported bruises all over his body too. Dream had stepped in right before the upperclassmen boys were able to get their hands on George. Age means nothing when you're six foot tall and Dream had displayed that privilege nicely by stepping in front of George and sending Kira's minions running away.

Dream was right. Expecting Dream to always be there to save him was unreasonable. Then again, he also thought Dream dating his bully was unreasonable, but in two months time, it had happened.

"Which makes Dream an even bigger dick because why would he date her?" Alex asks, folding his arms over his chest. "Isn't he supposed to be George's best friend?"

George rolls his eyes for what feels like the umpteenth time within the hour and in doing so, he catches a glimpse of dirty blonde hair. His head whips around so fast, he swears he hears a splitting crack. There, down the narrow brick path that runs through the campus is Dream. He's donning a simple white t-shirt and comfortable grey sweats, but he still looks like he's been stolen straight from a vogue magazine cover page. Half of his hair is tied up in a sloppy bun and he's got a few strands of hair curtaining his forehead. To put it simply, he looks perfect.

The only thing that takes away from his appearance is his less than perfect girlfriend who is currently hanging off his arm and laughing like Dream has just said the funniest thing in the world. Her laugh sounds like nails on a chalkboard. Sure, she's attractive, but her personality makes her appear rotten. This isn't just George talking out of spite or the hatred he's accumulated from her relentless bullying. Those have a big part to do with it, but they're nowhere near being close to covering everything that makes her such a pain to be around. Almost the entire student body hates her, but that's what makes her so popular. Hatred. Which her ego mistakes for jealousy and fear.

"He's my best friend just as much as both of yours, so shut up," George hisses right on time for Dream to pull up to their table.

"Hey guys," Dream greets with a lopsided grin. If his gaze lingers a little too long on George's, nobody notices (or rather, nobody says anything). "How are you?"

"Good," Karl and Alex chirp in unison. George misses the shared look they give each other, but feels the jabs that they give him.

"Yeah, I'm good too," George coughs out, raising a hand to rub at one side and then the other. "How- uh, how about you?"

The sooner this conversation is over, the sooner George will be able to breathe properly. Right now, all he can manage are labored breaths because Dream is standing in front of him with (must he repeat) grey sweatpants on. George doesn't *mean* to eye the prominent outline, but Dream's tall and therefore George, who is still sitting down with his history homework splayed out on the table, is at perfect eye-level for you-know-what.

So, he allows himself a few quick peeks.

When George lifts his gaze to see if anyone has been watching him, he's relieved to know that he hadn't been seen... except by Dream. And Dream's got that annoying cocky smirk smeared over his cherry lips, letting George know that he will definitely never hear the end of this.

"We're doing fine," Dream's girlfriend pipes in before Dream can answer for himself, giving George a sickeningly sweet smile. "And we were just leaving, right, Dreamie?"

George can't stifle the snort at the back of his throat which Alex supports with a light laugh. They're never able to control themselves when they hear the nickname leave her lips. It's cute, but the way she says it makes them cringe incredibly hard.

"Yeah," Dream agrees blindly, unsure what to really say with his girlfriend ushering them away from the table. It's clear that he wants to stay longer, probably to catch up with his friends that he seemingly never has time for anymore, but he doesn't find it in him to say anything. "Uh, George, you're still coming over tonight, right? To help me study History?"

George nods once, very stiffly because he can feel Karl and Alex glaring holes into him. Dream shoots him a grateful smile and then he takes his leave. George watches the pair walk away, watches Dream twirl his girlfriend around to appease her, watches him pretend like the invitation was just what he said it was instead of what they both knew it would become: George on his knees between Dream's legs with large hands running through his hair.

"You can't be serious," Alex says once the couple is out of ear-shot. "If it was just for revenge, why are you guys *still* fucking? If it didn't phase her the first time, it's not gonna phase her the fourteenth time."

Alex has also asked this question the past 'fourteen' times. Each time, George remains silent and that should be an answer by itself, but Alex still tries again the next time. It's a futile attempt to knock some sense into George. George knows what he's doing, he just doesn't know *why* he's doing it.

The first time was supposed to be the last.

On his way back from the late night studying in the library, George had run into a stricken Dream. What started as a rant about how he caught his girlfriend having sex with another man (in the school parking lot of all places) turned into a proposal for revenge. Dream brought up their highschool years, rekindled George's hatred for his girlfriend, and then used that to present his ingenious plan.

And it was a bold plan. A plan that involved having sex, leaving visible marks, and creating a new level of 'closeness' in their friendship.

George had pointed out that they didn't really need to fuck. They just needed to pretend they did.

But that no longer seemed plausible once Dream had George pinned against the lockers, one knee slotted in between jean-clad thighs whilst his sinful mouth worked wonders down George's neck. George turned putty in Dream's grasp, hands reaching up to tug at Dream's long, golden locks. Each bite Dream left on his sensitive skin punched another whimper out of George until he was left panting by Dream's ear.

After those soft mewls turned into outright moans of Dream's name, it became a real problem. Dream, who up until then had kept his cool, could no longer push away the desire to have George writhe underneath him. He painted those images in words, filthy words that left George trembling with a foreign need.

It was a quarter to nine. They had a little over an hour before the main campus buildings were closed for the day. George had read the time off the clock hanging in the hallway right before Dream had seized him by the arm and dragged him away. The conversation leading up to that had died thanks to mutual impatience and all George really cared about was how nice it felt to be handled so roughly by Dream.

Dream who was always so careful with his 'oh so fragile' best friend. Who would make sure never to jostle George too much lest he fall or shove too hard lest he bruise. Dream who always wanted to keep George pure and pristine.

"Fuck," Dream had whispered, breath fanning over George's neck as he hurriedly ushered them into the boy's locker room, locking the door behind them. "Fuck, George."

The tiles of the showers were still wet and felt uncomfortable to be pressed up against with his clothes still on, but George didn't have a say. Dream was looking at him with a dangerous amount of lust and George was certain that he was mirroring that suggestive expression.

"Are you sure about this?"

George's question had been abruptly kissed off his lips.

“Positive.” Dream promised, leaning in to connect their mouths in another heated kiss.

It was stupid of George not to tell Dream that it was his first time. It was stupid of George to even let that be his first time. However, he’s never been able to say no to Dream and it’s not like he hadn’t fantasized about this for months or maybe even years.

“You’re so good to me,” Dream grunted, lost in the pleasure granted as he sunk himself deep inside of George. “So, so good, fuck.”

The burn was unimaginable, but George was used to burning when it came to Dream, so he bit his lip and dealt with it. He’d meant to keep quiet, wanting nothing but to be the best for Dream, pliant and all for him to use, but Dream had waited. Waited until he felt George’s muscles relax around him and then talked him through the first few thrusts, right until they began to feel good for George too.

George tried to remain facing the shower tiles the entire time, not having the courage to meet Dream’s heavy gaze, but once they were both nearing their orgasms, Dream had pulled out. In the split second that George took to complain with a quiet whine, Dream had turned him around, hoisted him up and slammed him against the wall again.

“Want to see your pretty face when you cum for me,” Dream explained, leaving open-mouthed kisses down George’s jaw.

Too flustered to respond, George simply reached down and carefully helped guide Dream back inside of him. It didn’t help. It felt too lewd. The way his fingers grazed over his fluttering hole before the tip of Dream’s cock finally slid in. George pulled his hand away in embarrassment and wrapped his arms around Dream’s broad shoulders, letting the dirty blonde push in the rest with a skillfully angled thrust.

George swore he saw his tummy bulge when Dream had reintroduced himself to his walls, shaping them to fit his cock like a perfect sleeve. With Dream holding him up and fucking into him mercilessly at this angle, all George could think about was the ecstasy coursing through his veins.

Dream taught him pleasure.

And when they had finished and Dream had turned on the shower, letting warm water and bubbles of soap cascade down their blemished bodies, George mumbled it into Dream’s shoulder.

“Just this once.”

The first time was supposed to be their last, but it *wasn't*.

“I’m with Alex on this one,” Karl agrees, wrapping an arm around George’s shoulders. “Are you sure there’s nothing else going on between you two?”

Now that, George has an answer to.

“Yeah, nothing,” George affirms, fingers tight where they grip his pen. “He doesn’t see me like that.”

“If this is happening again, we need to set some ground rules,” George rolled his eyes, lightly flicking Dream’s forehead when the taller man leaned down in search of a kiss. “And one of them is no kissing outside of sex.”

“Who said we weren’t gonna have sex?” Dream teased with a wiggle of his eyebrows.

They were in George’s bedroom, figuring things out in broad daylight for such a dirty secret. George wasn’t really sure if they could even consider it a secret anymore. George’s roommates knew, hence why they weren’t home right now. Half the campus also knew, but thankfully to them George’s identity remained a secret.

Dream’s girlfriend also knew he was fucking someone else, but she didn’t seem to care. It only further solidified Dream’s belief of her dating him as an accessory. Perfect looks, perfect grades, perfect boyfriend. George expected him to break up with her, but of course he didn’t.

Because he’s a man and men think with their dicks. As long as she gets on his knees for him, she

still has a hold over him, and she knows that. That's why she isn't bothered.

Dream thinking with his dick is also why he showed up at George's dorm once a week. They didn't have a schedule. Dream's visits were spontaneous and sometimes it was risky or inconvenient, but George would open his door anyway. Would bend himself over his own bed, spread his legs, and curl his fingers into the sheets as Dream fucked him until he was full with an obscene amount of cum.

"Either of us can call it off at any time," George added after some thought. "No use of 'my' before any pet names too. I don't like that."

That's a lie. George loved being called Dream's. It's all he's ever wanted for so, so long. But he couldn't let himself pretend that any of this is real. It would only hurt more.

"Aw," Dream laughed as he reached out to gently pinch George's cheek. "I thought you liked being my princess, Georgie. My pretty baby. My needy little whore."

George frowned sternly and fought away the blush that crept up his cheeks. "No, because I'm not yours, Dream. Which leads me to my last point: either of us can fuck anyone else we want. However, I'd like to know before you shove your dick inside me again. STDs and all that."

Something akin to jealousy had surfaced on Dream's face, but it left as quickly as it came and George had felt like he imagined it. Dream remained silent, but his gaze shifted from George's in lieu of eyeing something on the wall.

"I'll stop this if I find someone I like though," George mumbled, staring at the flimsy piece of paper he drafted their rules on. "No offense, but I value loyalty."

It was meant to be a joke, but Dream hadn't laughed like George had expected him to. Instead, he took the pen out of George's hand, turned the paper to face him, and wrote a rule of his own.

4. No feelings.

It made sense for Dream to write that, but of course George couldn't really abide by it when he was already head over heels in love with Dream before they even started their stupid side relationship. So, yes, George was technically breaking the rules, but it's not like he could tell Dream that. He also can't call it off because Dream will need a reason and George doesn't have a reason other than the truth; he's a terrible liar. He'll just have to wait until Dream calls it off or breaks a rule himself.

'No feelings' to George means to not let his feelings delve any deeper.

No feelings, George reminds himself when Dream presses deep inside him, unintentionally claiming every inch he can reach. The words play in George's head like a broken record as he stares up at Dream, mesmerized by how beautiful Dream looks with his face pinched in pleasure. They engrave themselves into George's mind, refusing to let him forget even with Dream kissing him as they both reach their release.

No feelings. No feelings. No feelings.

"Right," Alex says, stifling a snort. "He doesn't see you like that, but you let him see you every other way. Literally."

"*Alex*," Karl scolds gently, giving the youngest of the trio a look that begs him not to push. "Look, George. It's up to you, but be careful, okay? We don't want to see you get hurt."

Karl means well. So does Alex. They show it in different ways, but they care the same amount. They care a *lot* and George is thankful that he has them because without them, he would probably be in one of the bathroom stalls, crying his heart out like a melodramatic teenager starring in a Netflix romcom. He still has his nights where he feels like shit, don't get him wrong.

George has moments where he regrets letting Dream do what he does—usually when he watches Dream tug his clothes back on, getting ready to return to his girlfriend.

Yet he can't find it in him to stop. He enjoys it too much. Having Dream's attention, feeling Dream's hands on him. He likes when Dream bites blotchy red bruises onto George's skin, stamps marks in the shape of his fingers onto George's thin waist and plump thighs. He wants to satisfy Dream. Even if he has to break his own heart to do it.

"I'll be careful," George says. A little white lie. Whether it's meant for his friends or himself, George isn't sure. "I'm always careful."

Later, George takes his time riding Dream, setting a slow and steady pace, so he can feel the addictive drag of Dream's cock inside of him. His thighs burn, but he continues to put as much power as he can into each bounce, taking Dream apart from above. Each guttural moan he draws out of Dream's quivering lips fills him with a shameful greed.

It also fills him with a sense of pride.

Dream is splayed out so beautifully underneath him. Beads of sweat collect over the defined arches of his eyebrows, roll down his chiseled jaw, and wet the long strands of hair falling over his grim pillows. George can picture him as God's greatest creation and that thought does something to him. George is defiling an angel.

Dream's grip on George's hips get tighter the closer to his orgasm gets and right as his stomach flexes, he huffs out a soft laugh, "You're so careful."

It's just an observation, not meant to be teasing. Dream notices George's determination to completely ruin him today with each methodical roll of his hips.

George scoffs, tossing his head back, "You have no fucking idea."

"Let me guess," Alex says when George joins him and Karl outside of the physics wing. "No studying done? Unless you guys got turned on in the middle of reading about the French Revolution. Then oui oui, I guess."

George repays Alex by smacking his arm.

“So much for being careful.” Karl points at the new hickey smack on the center of George’s neck. “He’s not even trying to hide it anymore.”

It’s true. Dream’s marks have been climbing higher and higher up George’s body, pushing at a boundary that they never made. George was going to say something, but he always found himself being distracted by the rewarding pleasure. It’s hard to think straight when the boy you’ve been in love with for practically your entire life is consuming you whole, inside and out.

Now it’s gotten to the point where Dream no longer cared about where he marked George. He did as he pleased while George still had to abide by the unsaid rule of not marking Dream above his neck. Because when it came to Dream, the marks were only for them, his girlfriend, and selective others to see.

It’s unfair. People usually don’t flirt with someone they think is taken; therefore, if Dream keeps this up, George will never be able to meet his *new* Prince Charming. Nobody will come sweep him off his feet and save him from the mess he’s gotten himself into. So, for the sake of his future boyfriend finding him sooner, George decides he’ll make a new rule to add to their list and tell Dream about it later—when he visits Dream again for ‘studying’.

“Devil at 2 o’clock,” Alex coughs into his fist.

George barely has time to react before he hears the familiar clicking of heels.

“Hi boys,” a shrill voice calls out and George smiles so tightly, he thinks he’s going to split his lip. “Karl! Love the sweater. And Alex, cool hat.”

George stares blankly at Dream, silently begging him to take his girlfriend away, but all he does is send George a smile like he doesn’t have a clue about what’s going on. George then stares at Kira, who’s still keeping up her overly nice act, and it’s just in time for her to conjure up whatever venom she’s been dying to spit at George.

“George! Nice.. weather we’re having today, right?”

She giggles as if she did something. As if implying that there was nothing to compliment George on was going to hurt George beyond repair. There would’ve been an embarrassing amount of silence following her ‘slick’ comment too if Dream hadn’t laughed out of pity.

George rolls his eyes, watching Kira giggle with glee. It's not Dream siding with his girlfriend per se that makes George mad, it's the fact that she's disguising her insult as a joke and he's humoring it like one. He's letting her insult his best friend. Someone who was in his life for almost three times as long as she was.

"We'll catch you guys around," Dream says sweetly as if his girlfriend hadn't just tried to humiliate George. "See you."

"Haha, bye!" Alex says, clearly faking his cheerfulness. Once he watches the pair disappear behind the corner of the hallway, he turns back to the other two loitering next to him. "I hate her. Literally, I hate her so much."

"That makes the two of us," Karl agrees, pinching the bridge of his nose.

George stares at the spot where Dream had just stood a few minutes ago, laughing at him without a care in the world, "Three."

George should ignore Dream. He should tell Dream that it hurt hearing him laugh at him with the girl he used to protect him from. He should be angry, he should do something, anything to punish him.

But he ends up in Dream's bed again.

"Sorry about earlier," Dream whispers, spreading George's legs carefully so that he can settle in between them. "She's *actually* pretty chill."

George doesn't know if Dream means the apology or if he's saying it to get the awkward tension out of the way. He usually gives Dream the benefit of the doubt, but his poor defense of his more than shitty girlfriend makes George lean towards the latter explanation this time. If it happened again, Dream would probably do the same thing. Still, George would give him another chance because he always lets Dream get away with everything.

However, when Dream tugs his shirt over his head and George's eyes rake down his tan skin and toned muscles, George finds that there are more important things at hand right now than his feelings. Like the boner aching to pop free from the restraints of his jeans.

"And I *actually* don't care. Now then," George says, fingers hastily unbuttoning his shirt until the silk falls off his shoulders and leaves his pale upper torso exposed. "Are we going to continue talking about the girl you're cheating on or are you going to fuck me?"

Needless to say, Dream silences himself by mouthing hot kisses down George's chest.

George loses himself to the sin of lust again. Dream knows just how to unravel him, knows all the things to do and say, knows how to make George feel like he's floating and crashing all at the same time. He makes vulgar promises, something along the lines of fucking George so hard with his fingers that he won't be able to take Dream's dick without crying, and he *keeps* those promises.

It's only when Dream grazes his teeth against George's neck, just inches away from where his jawline starts, that George has half the mind to tug on Dream's hair and pull him away. Dream stares up at him, worried that he's doing something wrong, but George shakes his head and slowly guides Dream down until he feels lips pressed to his shoulder.

"Not where people can see," George mumbles softly. "New rule. Rule 5."

Dream doesn't take a liking to the new rule. He presses his lips together, forming a thin line, and then waits a second or two before parting them again. No words leave him, just a soft exhale, and then his teeth clamp down on George's shoulder. The bite is rougher than usual; it feels like Dream is making up for what he's losing.

Dream doesn't ask why George makes the new rule, but George finds himself explaining it anyway. "Harder to find a boyfriend when I'm constantly covered in your marks."

Three of Dream's longer fingers catch on the rim of George's puckered entrance again, slipping in and out with ease. It's almost like Dream is taunting him, telling him to go and *try* to find someone better than Dream. Because he won't be able to. George already knows that though. He doesn't need Dream to fuck him dumb to realize that nobody will ever be able to compare to his sun-kissed best friend.

But it doesn't hurt to try. Actually, it might even be *good* to try. He needs to get over Dream at

some point and what better way than to find someone to take his place? He doesn't know why Dream cares anyway. It's not like he'll have a problem replacing George. With so many people after him, even when he's in a relationship, it's a surprise that Dream *hasn't* replaced George.

Maybe it's the benefits that come with being his best friend.

"You think someone else will be able to make you feel this good, baby?" Dream sneers, tugging George's hips towards him each time he thrusts forward, making the collision more breathtakingly pleasurable. "You think your *boyfriend* is gonna fuck you better than this?"

The words sound vile, laced with green envy, and George doesn't understand why. He can't think things through either because Dream wipes his mind clean every time the tip of his dick grinds against George's prostate. All George can do is lie there and take it. Take Dream's dick like he was made for it.

When he's close, he babbles incoherently and weakly drags Dream's hand away from his stomach. Dream mourns the loss of feeling himself each time he fucks into George's addictive heat, but then George positions the hand over his neck and Dream laughs.

"Thought you said no marks where people can see."

George shakes his head, looking up at Dream with eyes that appear glassy from unshed tears. His legs quiver uncontrollably from the force of Dream's thrusts, clearly overstimulated, but begging Dream to grant him another orgasm.

"Please, please," George begs, clawing at the sheets under him. "Please help me cum. *Please*, Clay!"

It's the use of his real name that causes Dream to finally tighten his fingers around George's neck. George has learned a few things over the many times that they've had sex, one of them being that Dream loves hearing George moan his real name. George doesn't know why it affects Dream as much as it does, but he uses it to his advantage whenever he can. It's playing dirty, but when there's a cloud of lust suffocating him, George doesn't feel guilty.

Dream's muscles turn tense and the movements of his hips grow sloppy. He lasts a few more thrusts before he releases inside of George which in turn pushes George over the edge. George cums so hard, he blacks out for a moment. Things only re enter his line of sight when he feels

Dream tenderly clean the mess off his body.

George whines when Dream lifts one of his legs up, too tired to move and also too shy to let Dream see his leaking hole again, now that the post-nut clarity is kicking in. Dream shushes him and says he'll be quick, but George can tell that he takes his time staring.

Afterwards, Dream climbs into bed next to George, draping an arm around George's lithe waist. This is frighteningly new. They've had sleepovers before, but not after having sex. After having sex, they usually leave and pretend nothing happened. It helps keep that friends-with-benefits line strong and defined.

Somewhere between then and the two of them falling asleep, Dream sleepily whispers into George's ear and leaves George feeling happy. Too happy. Happy enough to feel as if he'd climbed all the way to cloud nine.

"You're better than her."

It's the ones that climb the highest that also fall the furthest.

"Dream, you- you were supposed to be here half an hour ago," George stammers nervously into the phone. "Is everything alright?"

Dream's voice crackles through the speakers, "Sorry, George! I'm gonna have to take a raincheck. Kira wants me to take her shopping."

"Oh," George says, deaf to the flurry of apologies that leave Dream. "That's fine. See you later."

The line goes dead. George places his phone onto the table and then drags his cup of coffee closer to him. He feels ridiculous staring at the other cup on his table that's losing its steam, getting

colder and colder by the minute. He feels even more ridiculous for having thought that something had changed last night. That *maybe* there was a sliver of hope for him.

George tries not to think about the way people are sparing pitiful looks his way. Here he is, dressed up nicely and ordering two cups of coffee instead of one, only to be left alone. He's the face of rejection.

"Hey," someone taps his shoulder, but George doesn't bother looking up. "Mind if I join you? There aren't any more seats."

George waves his hand dismissively, "Be my guest."

When the stranger sits down, George finally sees him. He's got light brown hair, a boyish grin, and mesmerizing eyes that George can't really pinpoint the color of. Being colorblind hurts him in ways people can't imagine.

"George, right?" The man asks while George blatantly stares at the little mushroom on his hat. He's not judging, he just thinks it's cute.

"Yeah," George replies and then he finally places where he's seen this face before. "Weren't you in my Statistics class last year?"

"Sat right behind you. Little hurt you don't remember my name," the man replies playfully before glancing down at the coffee cup. "Tell you what. I'll give you my name if you let me have this drink. Better than it going to waste over some idiot, right?"

George laughs, gesturing at the cup with his hands, "It's all yours."

The man claps once in delight and then immediately brings the cup closer to him. George watches as he takes a long sip, appearing rather dehydrated, and then hums in satisfaction, ignoring the little mustache that the cream has given him.

"Sapnap," he introduces, reaching for a napkin and gently dabbing the mess around his lips.

“First name Sapnap, last name hopefully whatever yours is.”

Sapnap makes that the best Saturday George has had in a while.

That’s because most of his Saturdays are spent at Dream’s apartment from where he leaves late at night with bruised knees. Dream never walks him back. It’s a precaution they have to take, but George still wishes that Dream would at the very least offer. Especially because he knows George hates walking alone at night; especially because he knows George only does this for him. Getting asked to stay last night was a miracle and George shouldn’t get used to it.

After catching up to each other and reminiscing on silly memories from last year, Sapnap had led them out of the cafe and to the mall a few blocks down. The mall isn’t usually George’s scene, but he couldn’t find it in him to say no because hanging out with Sapnap seemed fun. It seemed like the distraction George needed.

Besides, Sapnap had struck up the enticing bargain of buying George whatever he wanted if he came with him. How could George pass up that offer? Rich kids were truly something.

Only after stepping into the mall does George realize that he has no idea what to buy. His sense of fashion isn’t bad, but it’s not outstanding either. Thankfully, another thing rich kids are good at is styling themselves. So, George allows Sapnap to drag him around the mall and treat him like his personal doll. It’s a little funny because it reminds George of when his mother used to do the same thing, but Sapnap has a lot more enthusiasm and that makes it more bearable and even endearing.

George ends up with more shopping bags than he can manage to carry and they’re filled with articles of clothing he would’ve never bought on his own. Not only does he lack the money, but he also lacks the confidence. Sapnap helps with both. He also helps with carrying the bags. It bruises George’s ego a bit to see Sapnap hold all the bags effortlessly when George had struggled with half the amount; he decides he’ll go to the gym sometime. Lift some weights. Whatever it is that people at the gym do.

Sapnap also offers to walk him home. George insists that he’s fine, but Sapnap jokes that George would need to make two whole round trips to carry all his things. George only agrees to Sapnap’s help because there’s unfortunately truth to what Sapnap says.

Karl swings the door open as soon as George gets his keys out of his pockets. He’s got a concerned

look on his face and Alex is right behind his shoulder, looking ready to recite his usual speech about how George should stop staying over at Dream's this late into the night because it's dangerous. Then they see Sapnap, arms full of designer shopping bags and a friendly grin on his face.

And they swoon. They actually swoon. George has to stifle a snort when they stumble back into the apartment and make room for George and his company to walk in.

Sapnap drops the bags in the living room, slips George his number that he'd written on a napkin from the cafe, and then wishes all of them a good night. After he leaves, George finds himself hauled onto the couch and forced to spill everything that had happened that day. To nobody's surprise, that night ends with George's roommates encouraging him to tear down Dream's room in his heart and build a new one for Sapnap.

Dream finds out about it on Monday.

Alex texts their group chat, sending pictures he'd managed to sneakily take. One of Sapnap carrying George's bags and another one of him giving George his number. George doesn't understand how Alex had managed to take them, but he's learned not to question his friend's tactics.

There's no reason for Alex to do any of that. No reason other than to be petty, of course. To tell Dream that he can stop using George now that George could possibly have someone else. He wanted to send it the night of, but George had somehow managed to postpone it. Just until it didn't seem *too* obvious that Alex was taking a jab at Dream.

Dream picks George up from his last class that day. He asks to come over, talking about how the history exam is in a few days and how he still doesn't know anything, and George allows it. In the back of his head, George assumes Dream wants to make up for the time they lost on Saturday, and he knows he should stop things if they get to that point, but he also knows that he won't be able to.

He has one weakness and that one weakness is strong enough to wear him out until he's empty.

Dream. Everything and anything that has to do with Dream. How is George supposed to look Dream in the eye and deny him of something when Dream's piercing into him with those starry

eyes and giving him that captivating smile.

In the end, George ends up being the one that wants to have sex. Sex will distract him from the upcoming headache and heartbreak that are tapping gently at his door.

Because Dream breaks the first rule.

They're stumbling into George's room with George muttering something about how American history is incredibly useless and biased. That rant turns into a complaint about how he should've applied for a college in England because he's "losing his heritage" and Dream is laughing. George has no idea what he's saying, but Dream is laughing and that's all that really matters.

"You're such an idiot," Dream teases, shrugging off his bag and leaving it somewhere next to George's door. He places George's bag down there too, after lugging it around for the past half an hour to demonstrate what a 'gentleman' he is. "It's your fault for taking history when you're a computer science major."

"Yeah well," George interrupts, meaning to bring up a valid argument, but pausing when he draws a blank. Why *had* he signed up for History?

Dream grins at him, knowing that he's got George cornered, and George sighs. That's why. Because the political science major towering above him was ironically bad at history. Criminally bad. George isn't the best at history either, but he's good at studying and so, of course he signs up for History. Just to help his idiot friend (but more influentially, his idiot *crush*).

Dream can't know that though, so George lies, "All the cute guys take history."

"You think I'm cute?" Dream raises an eyebrow, sitting down on George's bed and then beckoning the brunet over with a wave of his hand.

George makes a face of disgust as he sits down next to Dream, "You wish."

And then it happens. It *happens*. Dream's eyes flick downwards from George's chocolate pair, staring at rosy pink lips instead, and then after a second of contemplation, he leans in.

George freezes, barely having enough time to close his eyes before Dream pulls back and offers him half a smile. He feels another peck on his forehead and then soft fingers run through his hair, styling it better so that his fringe no longer tries to stab his eyes out.

“I think you’re cute.”

Obviously, George doesn’t know what to do. He doesn’t immediately assume that Dream is breaking the rule because it feels more like wishful thinking than reality and so he reaches down, fingers curling into the hem of his shirt with the intent of taking it off. Dream stops him with a fond laugh, poking his forehead gently.

“As much as I would love to ravish you, I really have to study for History first if I want to pass,” Dream sighs, running his hands down until they reach George’s waist where he delivers a longing squeeze. “But you’re going to Punz’s party tomorrow, right? I’ll steal you after if that’s okay?”

George nods slowly, still stunned by the lingering taste of Dream’s lips.

He doesn’t mention that Dream broke a rule.

Dream either doesn’t realize or doesn’t care that he did and George is not going to throw a fuss over it. Especially when he’s hoping that Dream will break it again.

The next afternoon is filled with gossip as well. Alex pulls him aside between periods, joining Karl and Niki by the emptiest spot in the corridor that they can find.

“Dream broke up with Kira,” Niki rushes to say, pulling out her phone to show them the deleted instagram photos and empty spaces where their anniversary date used to be. “But get this, not only did he break up with her—because obviously she doesn’t care about that—he did it *publicly*. Dumped her in front of everyone at her own birthday party last night. The one she’s been talking about for years! Her twenty-first!”

“Fucking ouch,” Alex says in between hiccups of laughter. “Serves her right though. Why’d he do it? Any details?”

For a moment, all George hears is a sharp ringing that slices through the silence his mind has made after he zones out of the conversation and jumps straight into the memories of last night. Dream kissed him and then pretended nothing had happened. He left early before they could *do* anything because he had somewhere to be, confirming that he broke the first rule. George wonders if any of that had to do with the break up and if it did, then what did it mean?

“George?”

George snaps back into the conversation and clears his throat. “Sorry, what?”

“We asked if you knew what it was about,” Karl mumbles, rubbing soothing circles onto George’s back. George hates that he’s being treated like he’s made of glass, but leans into the touch anyway. “He was at your house yesterday, right? Before this happened?”

George’s tongue rolls past his lips, wetting them to wash away Dream’s taste from last night. “Yeah, but he didn’t- he didn’t mention anything, sorry. I don’t know.”

The breakup is all that everyone’s talking about. George hears the hushed whispers between people that walk past him and sees as the number of followers on Dream’s instagram steadily climbs. Two of the hottest people on campus are now single and up for grabs. For some reason, George feels like this is worse. Dream is single, yes, but this means more people are interested. How long before Dream gets bored of George and finds new people to fuck around with?

Or worse, what if Dream starts dating someone new? Someone pretty, someone kind, someone just as perfect as him. Someone George can’t hate.

An arm snakes around George’s waist while he’s distracted and yanks him close.

“Hey, guys,” Dream greets, leaning in and inviting himself into the conversation.

George smells him before he hears or sees him. Dream is using that cologne he used to wear in high school, the one that smells like fresh lavender. George likes that one a lot. He gifted it to Dream on his 16th birthday as a joke because Dream hated wearing colognes and Dream, being the

oblivious and kind boy that he was (emphasis on was), had wore it to prevent hurting George's feelings. From then on, he went through at least two bottles before he started dating Kira who told him she hated it.

"Hey, bud," Karl chirps.

His hand is still on George's back, but it drops when Dream tugs George away again, this time to pat Karl's shoulder as an extended greeting. Karl raises his hands in mock surrender. If it's meant to elicit a reaction out of Dream, it doesn't. It only earns him a glare from George.

Dream's arm finds its way around George's waist again, too comfortable and too familiar. "What are you guys up to?"

"Oh, just," Niki laughs awkwardly, trying to hide her phone in the most non-discreet way possible. "Just talking about stuff."

Dream spies her hand placement and scoffs lightly, shaking his head. Those rebellious strands of hair fall out of his bun and over his eyes again. George doesn't know if he wants them to stay there or if he wants to help Dream clip it back.

"You can ask me about the break up, it's fine," Dream shrugs, grinning at them all too knowingly. "I can tell you guys are dying to know. It's all over your faces."

Alex shakes his head, sending Dream the first genuine smile he's given him in a while. "It's fine. As long as you're okay and as long as you're not gonna pull some stupid shit like that again."

"Trust me," Dream sighs, tilting his head and pressing his cheek against George's crown far too casually for it to not send George into a mini cardiac arrest. "Never again. She's okay with me fucking someone else, but she draws the line at me hanging out with my friends. Can you believe that?"

An awkward silence falls on the group. George can tell they're all trying too hard not to look at him with the exception of Dream, who can't seem to see the elephant in the room. Alex moves his gaze from Dream to George and George looks away.

"I believe it," Karl mumbles. "To her, hanging out with your friends means hanging out with

George. You know how she feels about George.”

To her. George knows Karl chose those words on purpose. He’s letting Dream know that they’re all aware of Dream and George’s relationship and only Kira isn’t. Because if she was, she would’ve been anything *but* okay with Dream fucking someone else. Dream doesn’t say anything, seeming to already know everything that Karl is hinting at. However, Alex’s question causes him to shift his weight from one leg to the other.

“I’ve always been curious. Why did you start dating her? After you knew what she did to George?”

George holds his breath. He wants to know the answer too. He should’ve asked a long time ago, but everytime he feels like doing it, his cowardice stops him. The risk of a fight ensuing scares George too much to act on his curiosity. Dream should’ve told him regardless though. He owed George that much for dating someone that had made several years of his life a living hell.

Dream answers nonchalantly, “I don’t know.”

It’s a lie. George can tell it’s a lie. But again, he’s too afraid to dig deeper.

“Bullshit excuse,” Alex replies, holding no real malice, only a strong urge to show Dream his idiocy. “Does Punz have booze for the party?”

Dream’s laugh tickles George’s hair, “He’s stacked.”

“Do you want a ride for the party?” Dream mumbles against George’s shoulder.

They’re currently sitting on George’s bed, pressed up against the pillows and underneath the warm blankets, while a random movie plays on George’s laptop. Neither of them are paying attention to it. George is busy staring at the clock in front of his room and Dream is busy playing with George’s hand, marveling at the difference in size.

“No,” George replies dismissively, spreading his fingers so that Dream’s can slot in the spaces

between. “A friend of mine already offered. He’s coming over to help me with my outfit, so it just worked out.”

Dream’s lips still, no longer idly pressing kisses, and he lets another scene pass by in the film before asking, “Which friend?”

George tries to shrug nonchalantly, but accidentally bumps his shoulder against Dream’s mouth in the process. Dream hisses, pulling back to check if his lip is busted. It isn’t, but his teeth do leave light marks in George’s shirt.

“How come you didn’t ask me?” Dream mumbles, rolling his tongue over his lower lip to soothe the tiny sting. “I dress well.. *and* I’m rich. Could’ve bought you nice, pretty clothes.”

“I already bought nice, pretty clothes,” George replies, barking out a laugh when he sees Dream’s signature pout. The one he uses whenever he wants something. “Well, Sapnap bought them, but still.”

“Sapnap,” Dream repeats and George feels the bed dip when Dream sits up a bit straighter, staring at the closed bedroom door with an indifferent look in his eyes. “Something going on between you two?”

A knot forms at the base of George’s throat that’s hard to swallow. George’s palms grow sweaty and he cringes as he uses those same hands to slap the lid of his laptop shut. The question is straight-forward. As straight-forward as the answer, which is no. George has only met Sapnap once and texted him a few times. He’s a delight to be around, but George doesn’t really see him as anything more than just a friend.

But for some reason, he lies, “Maybe.”

Dream tosses him an unreadable expression and George returns the gaze, unsure of what else to really do. There’s a pause and then Dream smiles, but it’s not in the way that George likes. The corners of his lips are tugged upwards, but just barely; it’s not enough to reach his eyes.

“Can I stay while he picks them out?” Dream asks, tugging the blanket up until it bunches by his waist. “Just so you can get a second opinion. He might not be as fashionable as you think.”

“Don’t you have to pick your own clothes out?” George raises an eyebrow, sliding out of bed and returning his laptop to his desk. “You’ll see me at the party, idiot, but I can send you a picture if you *really* want to judge his sense of style.”

Dream perks up at the offer and nods eagerly; it’s times like this that remind George of how he’s technically older than the giant occupying more than half his bed. (To really put things into perspective, Dream’s legs are long enough to hang off the edge of the mattress when he lays down.)

“He should be here any minute now,” George says, taking another glance at the clock. “And you should leave if you don’t want to be late.”

“I’m always late,” Dream says, but he stands up anyway, having the manners to fix George’s bed before he retrieves his bag and saunters over to the door. George approaches him, ready to walk him out, when Dream speaks up again. “We’re still on for *after* the party, right?”

George makes a face of disgust, but doesn’t deny it either, “Get out of my dorm, loser.”

Dream stumbles on his way out, tripping over the shoes strewn across the floor, and almost hits his face against the door. As if the world is working against him, Karl arrives home at the same time and swings the door open so Dream narrowly dodges a bullet, thanks to George yanking him back just in time. God forbid he enter a party with his pretty face all fucked up.

“Whoa!” Karl yelps in surprise when he’s immediately met with Dream’s face upon stepping into the dorm. “Hey Dream! Are you leaving?”

“Yeah,” Dream laughs, flicking his hair out of the way. George helps brush a few of the longer strands over his shoulder. “You nearly killed me.”

“Sorry,” Karl chuckles and then steps in past Dream to pat George on the shoulder. “Gogs, you’ve got a visitor by the way.”

Standing behind two tall men proves to be a challenge for George. He’s already visually impaired, he doesn’t need more limitations to his sight. George tiptoes, peeking over Dream’s shoulder, and sees Sapnap waiting patiently by the door. Hurriedly, he ushers Dream out and then encircles his fingers around Sapnap’s wrist, pulling him forward gently.

“Sorry,” George apologizes quickly and Sapnap shrugs it off with a polite smile. “Bye, Dream, I’ll text you!”

Dream parts his lips, trying to get a final word in, but George shuts the door before he can. It’s the first time he’s shown any sort of defiance and it’s all thanks to the worry he feels for having kept Sapnap waiting for so long.

“Boyfriend?” Sapnap asks curiously, letting George guide him to his room.

George chokes on air, spluttering as he tries to answer the question, “No, *no*. Best friend.”

Sapnap hums in understanding and then invites himself to sit on the vacant chair in George’s room. George wastes no time in tugging his closet doors open, presenting his wardrobe with jazz hands and a nervous smile. He knows there’s not a lot to work with and that it’s very, very monochrome. However, he trusts that Sapnap will find *something* in the mix to make him look good.

“Have you worn that skirt I bought for you?” Sapnap tilts his head to the side. George shakes his head no. That skirt is the *only* skirt that he owns and that’s because he doesn’t trust that he’ll look good in it. The only reason he even let Sapnap buy it for him is because Sapnap had spent half an hour begging.

“I think you should wear that. It’s a little cold though, so if you still have those thigh-highs you told me about, pair ‘em with it.”

George grimaces, unsure if that should really be his choice for the night. Sapnap reads his discomfort and then stands up, walking over to him so that he can carefully place a hand on the small of George’s back. George scrunches his nose up, trying to calm the wave of insecurities that are crashing onto his shores over and over again, and Sapnap pats his back tenderly to help him through it.

It’s nice having someone care for him like this. It’s also different. Different from the way his other friends look after him. George decides that he really likes it.

“Okay,” George breathes out softly, pulling out the articles of clothing that Sapnap’s advising him to wear. “What about on top?”

“Me?” Sapnap jokes and George rolls his eyes, lightly pushing him away. Sapnap raises his hands in surrender and then takes a step towards the closet, sifting through the options. “This.”

It’s a plain back shirt. Tight around the waist, but big enough to fall past his hips. Sapnap tells him to tuck it into the band of his skirt and George heeds those words when he puts the clothes on. He passes by Alex on his way out of the bathroom and Alex whistles playfully, giving him a thumbs up. It helps give George the little boost of confidence that he needs.

“One more thing,” Sapnap mumbles after walking in circles around George to scrutinize his ‘work of art’. He shrugs off his leather jacket and then swiftly drapes it over George’s shoulders. “You can keep that. I’ve got too many to count.”

“It’s too big though,” George mumbles, staring at the sleeves that nearly fall past his fingertips.

Sapnap snaps his fingers with a curt nod, cheekily grinning at George, “That’s the point. It’s alluring.”

Being broke also means that George doesn’t have many shoes to choose from. He’s got a decent amount and they’re not *bad* shoes, but there’s nothing super eye-catching. Sapnap reassures him that it’s alright when George slips into his black platform converses. The main attraction of George’s outfit is the skirt and the socks; they draw attention to his thighs which, in Sapnap’s opinion, are more than enough to have people swooning. George flushes a bright red at the comment. He’s had his fair share of admirers, but compliments still fluster him.

“You sure I don’t just look like a widow?” George snorts, looking down at himself and seeing the striking amount of black.

Sapnap makes a noise that’s somewhere in between a snort and a laugh, “A sexy widow.”

George doesn’t *feel* like a sexy widow. At least not until he gets to the party and feels all the eyes following him from the moment he steps out of Sapnap’s car.

Karl and Alex fend off all the weird people that jump at the chance to talk to George which isn’t

out of the ordinary. They *always* do this, but tonight it seems like they're more on guard than usual. They even deny the first round of drinks offered to them just to be that extra amount prepared in case something goes wrong.

"I'll be fine," George mutters under his breath when they come to a clearing by the main staircase. That's a lie. Every goosebump on his arms has risen to warn him of everything and anything that might be out of the norm, like soldiers preparing for a battle. "Go have fun."

Karl seems reluctant, his grip on George's arm having yet to loosen, but after another minute, he sighs and agrees to give George a bit of space.

"You'll text us if anything goes wrong?" Alex asks, nudging George's side with his elbow. George wiggles his phone in affirmation. "Okay, we'll catch you in a bit."

George thinks the last ounce of his damn *soul* that he had left *dies* when he watches his best friends disappear into the crowd. He wants them to have fun, there's no doubt about that, but now he's alone and he hates being alone. Social gatherings and him don't mix well together. It also doesn't help that he's wearing an outfit completely outside of his comfort zone.

So, like any sane person, George pulls out his phone and pretends to scroll through twitter. His sight is blurry, more focused on his peripherals than the bright screen in front of him, just in case someone tries to approach him.

They do. Multiple people do. George has conflicted feelings on the attention that he's receiving.

At first it's nice to hear quiet compliments from people that pass by him. A few of them linger, trying to get a number out of him, but George declines all of them politely. Eventually, it gets overwhelming. Because individuals turn into groups and suddenly people are trying to drag George into their circles like he's some kind of gem to collect.

Some people beg him for a dance and George refuses because the last thing he needs is a stranger grinding against him. One person tries to force him onto the dancefloor and George *really* starts regretting not having lifted any weights in his life because *fuck* their grip is strong.

"I really should get back to my friends," George mumbles, trying to wiggle his wrist free. His stomach coils, moths filing in instead of butterflies and eating away the warmth from the compliments, leaving him feeling ice cold. "They're probably looking for me."

“Just one dance,” the stranger insists, reeking of cheap alcohol.

“No, I really should go,” George tries again, yanking his wrist back. Their grip only tightens, threatening to leave ugly purple marks, and George winces.

Right before he drowns in the crowd of unknown dancers, arms secure themselves around his waist and pull him back into a familiar chest.

“Sorry, you don’t mind if I borrow him for a bit do you?”

George turns his head back, a sense of relief washing over him as he catches sight of golden hair that’s been styled with a generous amount of gel.

Dream doesn’t look at him, still occupied with staring down the stranger that has yet to loosen their grip. Dream’s eyebrows lower and one of his hands slide up to land over the fingers digging into George’s wrist. George watches with wide eyes as Dream pries the stranger off of him and then pushes the guy back with a gentle shove. His breath hitches and he unknowingly leans into the security of Dream’s embrace.

“Thanks,” Dream says, voice drenched in sarcasm.

George can only stumble helplessly as Dream drags him away from the loud noises and out onto the patio.

There’s less people outside and Dream easily finds a small nook for them to hide away in. George is confused as to why Dream is still so adamant about keeping things a secret now that he’s single, but he keeps quiet, telling himself that Dream probably has his own reasons. He’s in no place to complain either. It shouldn’t mean anything to him.

“Thank you,” he whispers, trying to rub away the fingerprints on his wrist. “Why are we here?”

Dream doesn’t reply. He stares with an intensity that makes George feel like he’s being pinned down. A confused giggle escapes George, trying to prompt an answer out of Dream, but Dream doesn’t catch the hint or doesn’t care. George’s cheeks dust pink once he sees Dream’s eyes slowly

travel down, all the way down, and then back up. They take a noticeable pause at the flash of skin that peeks between the hem of George's skirt and the rim of his socks. George doesn't think much of it (or he tries not to) until Dream steps forward and wraps a large hand over his left thigh.

"You're so tiny," Dream observes, flexing his fingers to show just how much of George's thigh he can easily cover. "Your friend did a good job, doll."

Dream takes one more step forward, his lips tickling the tip of George's ear as his hand slides higher and higher up George's thigh. George throws a worried glance over his shoulder, trying to spot any sneaky onlookers, but Dream distracts him by pinching his skin.

"You forgot to send me a picture," Dream mumbles, rubbing his thumb over the reddening area. His fingers occasionally dip further than necessary, treading on inner-thigh territory. "It's fine though. I'll see everything I want to see later, right?"

George gasps when Dream's other hand drops below his waist to grope his ass through the thin fabric of his skirt. The action causes the skirt to hike up George's legs and a chill breeze blows in between them, making his thighs tremble.

"Already?" Dream teases and then he angles his head down, sharp teeth tugging gently at George's earlobe. "I'll come get you in an hour, okay?"

An hour. George doesn't know the exact time, but he guesses it's somewhere close to 10. Dream usually leaves parties at the crack of dawn, but on nights where he's taking George home, he leaves around midnight. Therefore, one hour probably means two. George doesn't know if he can stand being here for two more hours, but he nods anyway.

Dream smiles, blows him a playful kiss, and then heads back into the house where his friends are probably waiting for him.

George wishes he would stay.

In all honesty, George probably should've remained outside. He should've sat on the ground in that little corner of Punz's big garden, out of sight from everyone, and kept to himself. But it had *been*

two hours and George's phone was very, *very* close to dying. If Dream wasn't going to come get him, then George was going to find some other way home because there was no way he was staying any minute longer.

So, like the idiot that he clearly is, George walks back inside the house to look for a ride home. Karl and Alex aren't replying to his texts, his ride *to* the party (Sapnap) is also nowhere to be found, and Dream—Dream is in the middle of some game taking place in the living room.

George stares at him blankly from afar. It's one thing for Dream to be busy with something important and it's another thing for him to be busy with something as stupid as party game. Dream appears relaxed, one hand gripping a beer bottle and the other hand—

The other hand propped on his ex-girlfriend's shoulder.

Either he's forgotten about George or he's cancelling on him for *her*. Again. Even after they've broken up. Does George really mean that little to him?

He knows he's a rebound. He knows Dream only has sex with him for fun. Yet it still hurts knowing that he isn't even Dream's second priority, but somewhere far, far below that. It hurts knowing that while he offers himself to Dream to make him happy, Dream finds more entertainment spinning a fucking bottle at a lousy house party full of people he hardly ever talks to.

He would rather spend time with them than his best friend.

George doesn't know how long he spends staring at Dream, but it's long enough for someone to notice. And by someone, George means the Devil's incarnate if they were a 5'6" girl in viciously red heels that were sharp enough to kill.

"You!"

George takes a step back as she races towards him. Her face is twisted to display her ugly anger and her hands are clenched into tight fists. She's wearing a bright red dress as well; the shade that helps her effortlessly demand attention in every room she steps in. That's why nearly everyone is watching them and George can't even have the benefit of looking down on her because she's only about an inch shorter thanks to the ridiculous height of her heels.

“You’re the bitch that’s been fucking my boyfriend!” She shrieks, shoving George so hard that his knees wobble and he falls back, ass harshly making contact with the ground. “I always knew you wanted him. You desperate *whore*.”

The force of George’s fall scares him into thinking he’s twisted his wrist, but he barely even has a time to check. Kira grabs a drink out of someone’s hand and holds it high above his head, threatening to tip it over.

“Remember this?”

George squeezes his eyes shut, her maniacal laughter and the position that they’re in bringing back unpleasant memories. He braces himself for the disgusting stench of alcohol once she tips the cup over and drenches him in it, but it never comes.

“Are you fucking crazy?”

George cracks his eyes open just in time to see the cup get slapped out of Kira’s hands. It flicks back, a few droplets sloshing out and splashing onto her dress instead. There’s a deafening scream followed by a temper tantrum and George almost feels bad. Almost.

“Are you okay?”

Sapnap kneels down, one hand resting on George’s back and the other one cupping his knee. “Do you need help getting up?”

George shakes his head, slowly standing onto his feet. He smiles at Sapnap shyly, thankful that he intervened, and oddly enough, Dream’s voice plays in his head, reciting his words from when they were younger. *You have got to start standing up for yourself, Georgie.*

“Try something like that again and I’ll dump a whole bottle over your head.”

George laughs at Sapnap’s aggressiveness. Dream might’ve been right about George needing to stand up for himself, but George was wrong about thinking he needed to stop relying on his friends for help. Because while Dream may not help him—

“Oh boo hoo. Cry me a fucking river, bitch.”

—Sapnap will. George wishes he’d known Sapnap sooner.

Speaking of Dream, the blonde finally shows up when his crowd of friends grow interested in the spectacle going on in the living room. “What’s going on?”

“That *boy* just ruined my dress!” Kira complains, gesturing at the barely visible stains on her shirt. “Dream, *do something!*”

“This *boy* was just giving you a taste of your own medicine,” Sapnap responds with a scoff and a roll of his eyes. “Let’s go, George.”

George jolts when Sapnap reaches around his waist and drags him in close, gesturing for him to follow his lead. He turns with the intent of listening, but Dream’s arm juts out and latches onto Sapnap’s free forearm.

“Dude,” Dream’s eyes are narrowed when he addresses Sapnap. “Don’t fucking make a scene at my friend’s party.”

Something shatters beyond repair inside of George. He reads the vile comments lurking inside of Dream’s sage green eyes that are dilated with contempt and he exhales softly in disbelief. Dream is this angry on behalf of someone who has been very vocal about her hatred for George, as if George *isn’t* his best friend—as if George *isn’t* in his bed every other night.

“Tell *her* that!” George cries out, gesturing at the girl hiding behind Dream. “Tell her to stop trying to pour her fucking drinks on me! Tell her like you used to before you- before you turned into *this!*”

George emphasizes the last word with a shove on Dream’s chest. It’s not that hard, but it’s enough to get George’s frustration across. Dream’s eyes widen at George’s sudden explosion of feelings, but George follows Sapnap away from the crowd before he can actually react.

George doesn’t know what he meant by “this”. There’s no doubt in his mind that it has to do with Dream’s sudden attachment to Kira, but Dream hasn’t really changed much other than that.

And yet that's enough. That's enough to change everything.

Sapnap's ranting about what just happened, but George barely catches a thing he says. He's too busy thinking about Dream. He's always thinking about Dream. However, this time he's questioning things. He's questioning why he loves Dream. He's questioning the reasons he fell for him, the reasons he's still falling for him, and the reasons he doesn't ever see himself stop loving him despite constantly being treated like this. Like something disposable.

"I'll take you home," Sapnap says, swinging his keys around his finger.

George nods absentmindedly, but before they can make it to the parking lot, they're stopped. Footsteps approach them quickly, the soles of the person's shoes skidding against the cement when they come to an abrupt halt after reaching them.

"I'm taking him home."

George sighs quietly upon hearing the last voice he wants to hear right now. His eyes drift up Dream's stiff body to his face, taking in the nervous twitch of his eyebrows and the clench in his jaw. He can't tell if there's regret or anger in the way that Dream speaks and that makes him realize that after they started having sex, he's barely been able to understand Dream at all.

"Don't you have to take your girlfriend home?" Sapnap asks, sounding very unimpressed.

"Ex," Dream corrects weakly with an awkward smile, a complete one-eighty to the look he was giving Sapnap earlier.

Sapnap scoffs, raising his eyebrows in mock surprise, "Oh, could've fooled me."

His eyes shift from Dream to George and he tilts his head up, silently asking if George is okay with the situation and George shrugs dismissively because that's all he has the energy for. A part of him wants to say no, wants to let Sapnap drive him home instead, wants to do nothing but sleep away his sadness.

But a bigger part of him wants to find solace in Dream's arms again. Because even though Dream

is the pain that he's running from, Dream is also the only safe haven that'll protect him from his thoughts. Dream is the only distraction that works.

And with Dream standing next to him and nervously fiddling his thumbs, George is reminded that taking care of Dream is all he knows. So, even if Dream rots with the guilt he's gained from hurting George, George still puts him first.

"Text me," Sapnap says with a knowing look and then he walks away. Dream watches him leave, a flicker in his expression being more than telling, but telling of what, George isn't sure.

When Dream looks down at George, George can already hear the apology dangling off the tip of his tongue. Dream takes a step forward, hands reaching out carefully in some sick attempt to comfort George when he'd been the one that caused him to hurt in the first place. George curls his fingers around Dream's collar and yanks him down with a seductive purpose.

"Take me home."

He's too tired to hear another one of Dream's empty apologies.

Something in the air changes.

Ever since that night at the party, Dream starts breaking their rules over and over again. He pulls George aside mindlessly, stealing a kiss off of the brunet's lips, anywhere and anytime he gets the chance to. In between classes, while they're studying at the library, after their pointless conversations when they're lying awake late at night.

It leaves George feeling skeptical instead of happy.

If he's being honest, as much as he trusts Dream and as much as he wants to give him the benefit of the doubt, everything feels like a ruse to get him to forgive and forget once again. To push away that damage that Dream had inflicted onto him, leave it in a box, and let it rot in an unkempt corner

to collect dust.

But George lets himself pretend like Dream's plan is working. He tries to blur the memories and find pleasure in the way Dream sees him as more than just a call for the night.

These days, Dream has felt more like his best friend than he has in months. He stays longer, he notices more things, he listens. Aside from the kisses and the occasional sex, things feel like they were back when they were inseparable. It reminds him of when they would always find each other and pay no mind to anyone else.

In short, George has him back. He has the boy he fell in love with *back*.

"Dream," George scolds gently when the taller man blocks him from reaching the library shelf. There's a book that George needs for physics sitting right behind Dream's head and it's the last copy; he has to grab it before someone else does. "Move."

"Tell me you love me," Dream shakes his head, grinning devilishly as he moves in time with George, effectively blocking every attempt the shorter man gives. "I'll move if you tell me you love me."

"Shut up," George laughs, giving Dream a gentle shove. Of course the taller of the two just has to overreact and stumble backwards, pretending to be wounded, which gives the shelf a dangerous shake. "Why are you saying that? You're an idiot, stop saying that."

Dream wheezes, reaching down to wind his arms around George's waist, "Only if you tell me you love me."

George sighs, pinching the bridge of his nose in feigned annoyance. There's practically no winning when it comes to Dream's stubbornness, but fortunately, George has had a decade's worth of training. He tiptoes, playfully nuzzling their noses together, before tilting his head and ghosting his lips over Dream's parted ones. There's no way Dream doesn't know what George is planning, but there's also no way Dream is going to stop him.

Not when he can get something better out of it. A kiss.

George has other plans though. He leans in even closer, stopping just when they're a hair's breadth

away from one another, and then swipes the book off of the shelf. Dream startles for a split second and then aims to get the kiss anyway as a reconciliation prize, but George jumps away.

“George,” Dream whines. When George ignores him to open up the book and find the page that he’s looking for, he whines ever louder. “*George.*”

It’s a miracle that they haven’t been kicked out of the library yet. George really needs to start coming here alone. He’s tried to, but Dream invites himself every time and uses the same excuse of “how are you gonna reach the top shelves without me”. It’s also pointless to argue with Dream because he was on the debate team in high school and has been argumentative since he came out of his mother’s womb (George is sure of it). It’s much, much easier to just let Dream do what he wants and suffer the consequences later.

“If you’re good, I’ll give you a treat after,” George promises. He doesn’t lift his gaze, but he can tell that Dream has a nasty smirk plastered on his face.

“What *kind* of treat?”

George flips through the pages of the book boredly and hums, “I’ll blow you.”

Once he finds what he’s looking for, he holds the book away from him and pulls out his phone to take a picture. Dream, who is nearly persuaded, blocks George’s camera with a hand just to be annoying.

“I can live without one blowjob, I think,” Dream says, shifting his hand down to let George take the picture before pulling him in close again. “Without a kiss though? I might die.”

George snorts at the cheeky attempt, wiggling his hand out of Dream’s loose grip, “I’ll blow you *here.*”

“And I’m sold!” Dream says, making a zipping motion over his lips with his fingers and tossing an imaginary key over his shoulder.

George's offer proves to be too tempting for Dream to pass up because Dream behaves the entire time. He stays quiet, keeps his hands to himself, and George almost forgets that he's there until he's packing up and Dream huffs to make his presence known.

"Did you forget about me?"

Dream's pout grows at George's guilty smile, but the latter makes it up to him by dragging him to the last aisle and dropping to his knees. There's adrenaline pumping through their veins from the risk of getting caught. This is something completely out of George's element, but with Dream moaning like a sinner above him, George finds himself enjoying the thrill instead of shying away from it.

"Fuck," Dream curses, voice low and breathy. The hand he has in George's hair trembles as he guides George further down while his hips thrust harshly into the welcoming heat. "You take me so well. So good to me, baby."

The praise draws a pleased moan out of George and those vibrations serve Dream well, sending shocks of pleasure to creep down to the pool of arousal at the pit of his stomach. George's jaw slackens, accommodating to the force of Dream's erratic thrusts, and each time he feels Dream hit the back of his throat, more tears dampen his long lashes.

"You're so pretty like this," Dream sighs, brushing back George's bangs. The eye contact only turns George on even more and one of his hands slides down, rubbing against the bulge straining against his jeans. The desperate touches don't go unnoticed by Dream and he huffs out a laugh, slowing down his thrusts but making up for it with strength. "Getting off to this, princess? What if someone walked by right now? Would you stay on your knees for me? Let them watch as I use you like the little whore you are?"

The thought is humiliating and yet George whimpers, grinding against his palm a little harsher. As if on cue, his phone rings in his back pocket. Dream comes to a stop, allowing George to messily pull away and turn the ringer off before they get caught. George frowns at the contact name, making a mental note to call them back later, and then pockets his phone again. He looks up at Dream, opening his mouth expectantly, only for Dream to lean down and *spit* right into his mouth.

George's cheeks burn with embarrassment, but he swallows without a complaint.

"Good boy," Dream coos, lightly slapping the side of George's face. "Who was calling you,

sweetheart?”

“Uh,” George hesitates although he’s not really sure why. “Sapnap.”

It’s such a turn off to talk about someone else during sex, but the way Dream’s face hardens and his fingers drag down George’s face to grip harshly at his chin has George wanting to do it some more. A thumb presses down on George’s lower lip, prying it apart from its other half, and George listens to the silent command, opening his mouth for Dream to do as he likes. Dream taps his thumb against George’s tongue twice before smearing the saliva over the glossy pair of lips.

George ignores the dull ache in his jaw and waits patiently for Dream to carefully guide his dick back into his mouth. The gentle maneuvers don’t fool him. Dream is only kind until he’s fully settled inside and then his pace is brutal, always pushing in as deep as he can for as long as he can. George comes close to gagging a few times when Dream pins him down and refuses to let him up until George claws at his thighs to signal that he needs air.

“Why don’t you call him back, hm?” Dream whispers, thumbs hooking into either side of George’s mouth and tugging enough for George to wince at the stretch. “Let him hear how slutty you are.”

George can’t shake his head to protest, but even if he could, he wouldn’t. The possessiveness that drips out of Dream’s mouth and chains George to him is undeniably hot. George could very much see himself getting used to this.

He shouldn’t.

It’s still unclear to him why he’s still letting Dream use him when the reason for their arrangement no longer exists. There’s no more vengeance to achieve. Everything should’ve ended the second George found out about Dream’s break up and yet here he is, gasping for air whenever Dream feels merciful enough to let him pull off his dick.

George figures that it doesn’t matter. It’s not worth diving into and will just cause unnecessary headaches.

Because now Dream *sees* him.

Dream cleans him up with gentle touches, kisses away the unshed tears, and showers him in words

of praise and gratitude. He pulls George in close, cradles him in his arms, and whispers about how lucky he is to have George in his life. It's not the most romantic place—the aisle of 'biochemistry journals' that is—but George doesn't care. He sits still and lets Dream pet his hair, muttering about the resemblance between that and lulling a cat to sleep.

"I love you," Dream says, his warmth breath breezing over George's forehead. He doesn't mean it in the way George wants him to, but George closes his eyes and pretends that he does. "Say it back."

"No," George denies. "I don't need to say it."

It's obvious in the way George treats him, putting him first before everyone else—even himself. It's obvious in the way George knows everything about Dream, from his favorite color to how he likes his coffee. They've been best friends for as long as they can remember, it would be *impossible* for George not to love him.

Still, George can't say it back.

Dream always reasons that it's because George is bad at expressing his emotions and George lets him believe that. George never tells him that it's because he's afraid he'll accidentally express *too much*.

Dream is an attentive listener, especially when it's something he wants to hear. George has never said the words out loud because it fills him with hot, guilty shame, and because of that there's so much pent up frustration just waiting to be let out. So, if George says it—if George tells Dream that he loves him—

Dream will be able to tell that George doesn't mean it the way that he does.

"Can I come with you?" Dream asks in the middle of a yawn. "I wanna get to know him too."

“Why?” George scoffs, buttoning up his shirt and tossing a glance over his shoulder at the sleepyhead still sprawled out on his bed.

Dream kicks the covers off, stretches his limbs out, and then sits up. If George weren't so busy getting ready, he would probably stop to coo at how adorable Dream looks when he's sleepy. Long strands of dirty blonde hair stick up in awkward angles and weak fists rub at heavy eyelids.

“Because,” Dream says like that's reason enough. George raises an eyebrow and Dream sighs, racking his brain for another excuse. “Well, what if he likes you? I have to make sure he's- you know. Safe.”

“If he likes me, you would be interrupting a potential date,” George fires back, twirling around once in front of his reflection.

He's wearing a plain white button up and loose fitting jeans. It's nothing spectacular, but it shows that he cares enough to make an effort and if George is allowed to be kind to himself, then he would even say he looks nice. He's missing something to make it really stand out, but he doesn't understand fashion enough to know exactly what.

Dream mumbles something under his breath and George meets his gaze in the mirror, “What was that?”

“I said,” Dream sighs, getting up off the bed and heading towards the closet. George watches him look through the options before pulling out a baby blue sweater vest and bringing it over to him. Hanging it in front of George's torso, Dream smiles and presses a doting kiss onto George's cheek.

“I'd make it up to you by taking you on one myself.”

George freezes, eyes widening at Dream's bold statement. It could very well be a joke, but George swears that he sees sincerity in the way Dream pulls him into a shy backhug. He slowly turns his head around to demand an explanation, but Dream refuses to meet his gaze. There's a faint shade of red brushing over his cheeks and his straight ivory teeth are peeking out to nibble on his lower lip.

“Don't mess with me, Clay,” George whispers and a frown etches into his forehead, depicting the lack of mirth in his tone.

Dream scrunches his nose up and finally drops his gaze, but it falls right past George's and lands on the ground instead. "I'm not. I- I want to take you out on a date. If, uh, if you'll let me."

It feels surreal. An overwhelming feeling washes over George, but he's not sure if it's relief or fear. There's joy from hearing the words he's waited years to hear and then there's fear from his insecurities whispering that he's not good enough. Somewhere in the mix lurks the doubt that had never fully gone away—the worry of this being a part of Dream's elaborate apology.

"Why?" George doesn't mean to ask that out loud, but he's thoroughly and utterly confused.

Dream blinks twice, taken aback by the question, and he raises a hand to sheepishly rub at the nape of his neck. "Because I like you?"

It sounds unsure and George doesn't believe it for a second. If he's going to be fair, then maybe Dream only sounds this way because he's nervous, but then again this is *Dream*. Dream hardly ever gets nervous; he has the confidence and ego of any rich, attractive man obsessed with girls and cars.

"The rules," George reminds him meekly. "Rule number four, you wrote it—no feelings."

"Oh," Dream says and his face falls. He takes a few steps back, awkwardly swinging the sweater vest around before putting it down neatly on the bed. "I'm sorry, I guess, uh. I guess I read this wrong."

His reaction only confuses George even more. Dream stumbles around, looking for his shirt and his bag, and George stands still, trying to decipher the emotions that are flickering across Dream's visage. The panic inside of George reaches unimaginable heights.

"Wait," George says and Dream stops shuffling around, eagerly looking up at George with eyes that sparkle with something George allows himself to identify as hope. "I- okay."

"Okay?" Now it's Dream's turn to be confused. Although the way his face lights up makes it seem like he has better luck in figuring things out.

George smiles, allowing himself to relax. “Yeah, you can come with us.”

“What- George,” Dream whines, stomping once to get George to quit teasing him. It’s cute and therefore it works against him because George simply shrugs and retrieves the vest lying on the bed. “*George*, come on.”

Right as George finishes tugging the vest on, Dream lunges forward and picks him up with ease. George yelps, hands flying down to Dream’s shoulders. Dream spins around once and George squeezes his eyes shut, surrendering with a light punch aimed at Dream’s chest.

“Okay, *okay!* I’ll go on a date with you!”

“This is your one and only chance to impress me,” George warns when Dream picks him up for their date. He doesn’t really mean it because with Dream, George seems to have an endless amount of ‘second chances’ ready.

“That’s okay,” Dream grins, opening the passengers’ side door for George. “I only need one.”

George thinks it’s a bold claim. Especially when Dream is unaware of the extent to which George’s feelings reach. For all Dream knows, they’re two best friends trying something new. Everything could go wrong.

But of course, everything *doesn’t* go wrong.

George hates amusement parks. They’re crowded, noisy, and George sucks at all the games. So, when Dream pulls up to the annual fair that rolls around this time of the year, George thinks things are already heading south.

“I’m gonna change your mind about them,” Dream promises, helping George with his wristband. “Give me an hour and if you hate it, we can leave.”

George gives him an hour. Dream makes it the best hour he's ever lived.

All the booth games are light work for Dream and in no time, George has more prizes than he can hold in his hands. The perks of having a date with long arms though, is that Dream can hold them *for* him. They make the mistake of hitting the games before the rides because there's no way Dream can hold four large stuffed animals through three loopholes, but George doesn't mind.

"I think we've got more than enough prizes, Dream," George laughs, watching Dream take cautious steps forward to avoid falling over. He can barely see his own two feet over the large stuffed animals on his hands, but he's got the determination that narrowly pulls him through. "Let's go home."

"No," Dream replies, voice muffled by the bunny in front of his face. "We have to go on one of the rides. At least one!"

"Yeah and then you're going to drop everything, idiot."

"I'll be fine," Dream argues, but the way he nearly trips over a pebble says otherwise. George snorts, poking Dream where he's ticklish just to be that extra level of annoying. "Ow, stop. I'm not changing my mind."

They end up riding the ferris wheel.

"You're scared of heights," George says as they step into the balloon. He sits down across from Dream and watches lanky limbs struggle to secure the prizes. "We don't have to ride this, you know. I know it's a must and all, but still."

"Don't worry," Dream reassures him, peeking over the stuffed bear that covers half his face. "I'll be staring at you the entire time."

George *worries*. Worries more than he would've if Dream *hadn't* said that. Here he is, sitting in the passenger car of a ferris wheel with the boy he's in love with *while* said boy stares at him like he holds the secrets to the night sky.

When it's their turn at the top, George glances over at Dream to check if he's okay and sure enough, Dream is staring directly at him.

"Stop that," George hisses shyly, but it doesn't deter Dream. The toys in Dream's hands fall to the bottom of the cabin and Dream stands up carefully, head bent at an awkward angle so that it doesn't hit the roof. George leans further back the more Dream closes their distance. "What are you doing?"

"George," Dream says and when he kneels down on one knee, large hands resting on thin thighs, George turns bright red at record speed. "Will you go out with me?"

George laughs nervously, hands folded over his lap, "I'm- I'm already going out with you, idiot."

"I mean," Dream scoffs, nudging an extra inch forward to press his forehead against George's. George knows that Dream's eyes shine like bright jades, but to him they resemble sunflowers in full blossom. "Will you be my boyfriend?"

A resounding crackle goes off behind them and George sees the color of the fireworks in the light that hits Dream's face, illuminating his pretty features. George's lungs deplete themselves of all the air stored inside, causing him to gasp a breath in. His shoulders raise and his gaze turns shaky, eyes round in shock.

Another firework explodes in the near distance. George swears that his heart thumps louder than the consecutive snaps of the dying explosion.

"Yeah," George breathes out, barely managing to comprehend what's going on. "Yeah- I- yes."

He only succumbs to the joy that builds inside of him when he sees Dream grin. It's wide, genuine, and reaches his eyes, forming them into little crescents that George adores. George finds himself returning one just as big before leaning in and delivering the first kiss of the night as well as the first kiss of their new relationship.

Their giggles drown between their lips and die on each other's tongue. George is no longer left with the bitter aftertaste that follows Dream's savory kisses and instead of longing regret, George feels a new kind of desire. One that doesn't burn out from the realization that he doesn't have Dream because now he *does*.

“Did I impress you?” Dream asks, snagging another peck off of George’s lips when they pull away before scrambling to get their abandoned prizes before the ride comes to an end.

George rolls his eyes fondly, “No, you didn’t.”

“Tell me you love me,” Dream whispers teasingly, kissing a sloppy path down George’s neck. George pushes his covers further down his body, the heat emitting from Dream being more than enough to keep him warm. “Come on, you know you want to.”

“I’m not saying it,” George replies, swatting Dream’s hand away when it sneaks in between his thighs. “We are *not* having sex while my roommates are sleeping next door.”

“But, Georgie,” Dream laughs, nipping at that godforsaken spot right underneath the junction where George’s jaw meets his neck. “I wanna make you feel good.”

His mouth travels lower, teeth tugging with purpose, and his tongue slips out to deliver kittenish licks over areas that will definitely bruise in the morning. George hates how easy it is for Dream to convince him. That’s half because Dream is sinfully talented with his mouth and half because George’s legs run an “open 24/7” service when it comes to Dream.

“I’ll stop if you say it,” Dream mumbles, kneading George’s thigh and then lifting it just enough for him to slot one of his legs underneath it. “What’s it gonna be, George?”

And because George’s confession is still too shy to slip out, Karl and Alex have to add earplugs to their grocery shopping carts.

They go on a second date. Then a third. Then a fourth. Each goes swimmingly. Days turn into

weeks and weeks turn into months. Finally, four months and nine dates later, George gets the courage to ask Dream the question that's been on his mind for years.

They're at Dream's apartment and Dream is busy typing up his report when George knocks him on the back of the head with a well-aimed pillow. Dream has told him multiple times that he should try to pick up archery as a sport and George has denied the suggestion just as many times, but he will admit that he's almost a perfect shot.

"Yes, how can I be of service to the most beautiful boy in the world?" Dream asks, spinning his chair around dramatically to depict that now *really* isn't the best time for George to bother him.

It warms George's heart to know that Dream still makes time to entertain him regardless and puts him above something as important as his grades. George feels a little selfish, but he likes being put first.

"Why did you date her?"

George doesn't have to say a name for Dream to figure out who he's talking about. Dream has had his fair share of exes, two of which have been girls, but George is clearly referring to his longest and most recent relationship. There's little room to confuse that.

Dream relaxes in his chair, arms propped on the armrests and head tilted back slightly. "Remember how obsessed she was with me back in highschool?"

George nods, gesturing for Dream to continue with his hands and Dream snickers.

"Well, she used to tell me all her future plans. College, career, family, retirement," Dream says and a painful grimace appears on his face as the memories resurface. George stifles a laugh at that, suddenly remembering how much Dream used to rant about her. "The one she cared about the *most* was her twenty-first birthday. Talked about how she wanted it perfect and had a whole checklist for it too. Can you imagine? A whole 4 year head start."

Sounds about right, George muses. Dream's ex had always been a stickler about her birthdays and for some reason, Americans always act like turning twenty-one is the same thing as being reborn.

"Well, having a boyfriend she could see herself settling down with was on that list, as crazy as it

sounds.”

The more Dream explains the story, the more George thinks he knows where this is going.

“So, I stepped up to the job out of the *kindness of my heart*.” George makes a face at Dream and Dream snorts. “Okay, not really. I wanted to dump her on her birthday.”

George’s jaw drops open.

“What? Don’t give me that look! She deserved it!” Dream huffs, folding his arms over his chest. “I did it for *you*.”

“*Me?*” George chokes, sitting up straight and placing a hand on his chest. “Me? Why me?”

“Because you weren’t gonna get back at her so I wanted to?” Dream says matter-of-factly, leaning forward and giving George a playfully judgmental look. “Are you seriously gonna tell me you would’ve done something? You offered her your jacket once because she was cold and nobody else cared enough to.”

George turns from shocked to offended, but with no solid argument to defend himself with, he has to forfeit. He ends up grumbling sourly and sticking his tongue out at Dream; Dream calls him immature, but then sticks his tongue out as well. George feels a little ridiculous doing it, but he thinks Dream looks incredibly endearing.

Golden retriever boy vibes, as Niki would say.

Affection spreads a comforting warmth through George’s body. The thought of Dream forming and going through with such an elaborate plan on *his behalf* is both flattering and scary. While George is thankful that Dream cares about him enough to go above and beyond for him, if this is true, then Dream is also an amazing actor. He had *everyone* fooled.

George likes to think that being in love with Dream means knowing the conniving devil like the back of his hand, but this proves otherwise. This lets him know that Dream can lie well enough to beguile him, so everytime George has caught him in a lie, it’s either because Dream *let* him or didn’t care enough to hide it well.

Regardless, there's one piece to this puzzle that doesn't fit.

"Wait so then," George pauses, lifting up a finger as new lines start connecting the dots in his head. "Why did we have sex to get revenge on her if you were already planning all of *this*?"

"Because I can't have people think I'm getting *cheated* on," Dream says as if it's the most obvious thing in the world. "If people think my girlfriend is cheating on me, they're gonna start speculating that I'm lacking in some kind of way and I'm *not*."

The level of pride that Dream has should be considered a criminal offense.

It also strips the conversation of any hint of romance, leaving it bare and bland. Their oddly specific sense of humor is what saves it from being a conversation killer. George stifles a snort and Dream chuckles, knowing he's got George roped in by his simple, but provoking explanation.

"I have to show them I'm still desirable, you know. The *most* desirable, even. 'Her loss' kind of thing."

A few seconds pass by. The two of them stare at each other, eyes communicating thoughts that their mouths are too lazy for. George's eyes turn narrower and narrower until they form little slits.

"I think that was the most boyish thing you've ever said. And the most unattractive. You're lucky I'm already your boyfriend."

Dream barks out a laugh at that and then turns back around to return his attention to the report that very much needs attention if he wants to hand it in before the deadline. "Oh come on. You love me."

George smiles to himself, affection breathing happiness into him, and then nods, basking in the safety of knowing Dream can't see him.

He does. He loves Dream.

In the way that Dream wants him to and in the way that Dream loves him.

Half a year in, George finally confesses what Dream has been patiently waiting to hear.

There's no major event that prompts it and they're not anywhere grand. It's just the two of them sitting in Dream's apartment again, Dream with a guitar in his hands and George lying on his couch, silently watching him play. Maybe it's a certain song that Dream sings or maybe it's just the way he smiles shyly whenever he meets George's gaze, but George feels a sudden urge to just let it all out.

He doesn't have the right words prepared and he doesn't have the experience. All he has is his heart on his sleeve and a bountiful amount of feelings for the boy with the long blonde hair and dazzling smile.

"I love you."

Dream's fingers stop plucking at loose strings. The last note rings through the apartment, mirroring the way George's voice echoes in Dream's head.

"What?" Dream says softly, carefully lowering the guitar down onto its stand.

He's definitely heard George loud and clear, but the disbelief stays. George can't blame him though. He's kept Dream waiting for far too long. If anything, George should be thankful for Dream's patience. It's never been his forte and yet he hasn't rushed George into saying anything, not once.

"I love you," George repeats, trying his best not to shy away from Dream's intense gaze.

The grin that immediately breaks out on Dream's face is so wide it nearly scares George. Dream

strides over, long legs making the walk short and easy, and then plops himself right on top of George. If the couch is too small for Dream by himself, George isn't sure *why* his boyfriend thinks it can fit both of them. Also, while it's true that you never *really* know how other people see you, George doubts that Dream sees a bodybuilder when he looks at George. So, what on Earth makes Dream think it's a good idea to drop his *entire* body weight on him? And without any sort of warning?

"Say it again," Dream whispers, brushing back George's bangs so that their eye contact isn't interrupted in any way. The intimacy is enough to make George blank out. "George, baby, say- say it again."

George hesitates, throat itchy from his timidity, but then he figures he's been cruel to Dream for long enough. "I- I love you."

The kiss that Dream bestows on him is heavenly. They've kissed before, but never like this. Never with so much meaning. Dream breathes life into him after stealing all the air in his lungs and even though George is lying down, he feels like he's slipping somehow. His hands clutch onto Dream's shirt and he arches his back up, trying to get closer to the sole pillar that keeps him from hitting the ground too hard. Dream brackets George's head in between his hands, lifting some of his weight off of George mercifully, but George no longer wants that.

He wants Dream pressed up against him, wants to hear their heartbeats race each other, wants to feel how much Dream loves him and wants Dream to feel how much he loves him back.

If it weren't for the way his chest starts to ache from the lack of oxygen, George would've believed that he was dreaming. It feels unbelievable how everything he once deemed as unattainable is now being handed to him on a silver platter.

And it's *so* much better than anything he could have ever imagined. That's what prevents the tiny bubbles of fear from popping.

Dream kisses George like he's trying to reach those irrational fears and steal them too. George tilts his chin up, pouring everything that he can into the kiss, but the worries cling and refuse to leave. So, Dream does what he does best. He provides George with a distraction from the negativity that lurks.

"I'm so lucky," Dream mumbles onto George's lips, not wanting to part just yet (or ever). George laughs shyly; the praise sounds more like a reminder. Dream is reading George's insecurities and subtly trying to wash them away. "I can't believe you chose me."

“I should be saying that to you,” George replies, absentmindedly tracing circles onto Dream’s bicep and smiling at the way Dream jokingly flexes under his touch. “I mean, you’re *desirable* and all that. Right?”

Dream snorts, “You’re still on that?”

George’s teasing backfires on him because Dream shows him what he means by desirable. He humiliates George, makes him come undone with the skillful maneuvers of just his tongue and then his fingers. By the time he’s *finally* stretching George out on his dick, George’s legs are shaking and there’s a cramp in his stomach from the overstimulation.

George still asks for Dream to fuck him faster. Dream denies him that, but what he lacks in speed, he makes up for in strength. He mutters something about taking his time with George tonight and dismisses George’s constant begging.

Dream marks this as the first time they’re making love which is why he tries to make it slow, passionate, and unforgettable. While George adores the hopeless romantic, it’s hard to appreciate gentle strokes when he already knows just how rough Dream can treat him. He knows Dream prefers it that way too, so after giving the blond a few more minutes for his romantic endeavors, George urges him to forget about ‘making love’.

In his opinion, they’ve *been* making love ever since they started dating because everything they’ve done since then, they’ve done with love.

What finally convinces Dream is George reaching out and slapping him on the cheek. It’s not hard enough to bruise or even hard enough to turn Dream’s head, but all George cares about is getting a reaction out of Dream. Dream’s shock brings his thrusts to a sudden stop and George bites his lip, aware of the anger that’s brewing in those stormy eyes. Dream lifts his hand, bringing it down on George’s cheek with so much force, the smack echoes in the room.

Arousal shoots straight down to George’s neglected dick and Dream doesn’t miss the way it twitches. “Of course you’d like that. You’re a little pain slut, aren’t you?”

The sex is so much more memorable with Dream fucking him into the mattress and moaning filthy confessions into his ear. ‘I love you,’ has never sounded more sinful and George loves it. Loves Dream can confess to being in love with him and then fuck him like he doesn’t mean it.

Dream says it again when they're all cleaned up and minutes away from slumber.

"I love you," the words breeze through George's hair. "I could say it over and over again. Until I die."

George shakes his head, shifting around until he can comfortably look up at Dream. "You don't have to. Just show me that you do."

Dream's smile falters for a second, but George ignores it to admire how beautiful he looks in the moonlight.

"George," Dream whispers and George reads the hesitancy, but doesn't question it. "There's something I need to tell you."

If George were a little more awake, if he wasn't lazily keeping his eyes open, Dream would've probably said it. But George yawns and that look of clarity in Dream's eyes disappears.

"Nevermind," Dream chuckles softly, pressing a kiss onto George's forehead which prompts the brunet to close his eyes. "It's not that important."

Maybe Dream isn't as good of a liar as George had thought because he's definitely hiding something. The only reason George doesn't ask is because this is *their day* and George wants it to be perfect.

He wishes he could erase the last five minutes.

"Hey," Sapnap greets George with an overcompensating amount of enthusiasm. "Come in."

George returns the smile awkwardly, stepping into the apartment that's become familiar to him as their friendship has grown over the course of a few months. He can sense the dread lingering in the air, but Sapnap either doesn't want to address it or is looking for a segway into the conversation.

"How are you?" George asks while slipping off his shoes. Sapnap had texted him to come over and sounded really frantic about it, but he's also acting like that didn't happen and it's confusing George. "Everything good?"

Sapnap swallows thickly and George pretends not to notice it. "Yeah, everything's good with me! Everything's good."

It's not convincing in the slightest.

"How about you?" Sapnap raises his eyebrows, lips twitching into a forced smile. "And, uh- and Dream?"

George blinks twice, turning all the way around so that he can face Sapnap with a confused frown on his face. "Yeah.. why wouldn't it be?"

"No reason," Sapnap shakes his head, lips still sealed tight. "Just wondering if anything happened. It's been a long time since uh—since the party."

That's the first thing Sapnap has said with any real honesty to it since George has stepped foot in his apartment. George nods slowly because it's true. Six months is nothing to nod past. There's happiness and pride that swells within George's chest when he thinks about it. Everyone has a reason behind their smile and George's reason is Dream. It's always been Dream, but now, he doesn't have to shy away from the fact.

That's why he's smiling right now as he stares down at the polished floorboards.

"Yeah," George laughs, feeling a bit giddy as Dream's face flashes behind his closed eyes each time he blinks. "I told him I loved him yesterday. For the first time."

Sapnap's lips part in awe, "Oh, wow. Really? With the way you talk about him I would've thought

you said it ages ago.”

George shakes his head, leaning against the wall and staring off into the distance. He knows that how he feels about Dream is obvious. It’s been that way since he fell in love with him all those years ago and yet Dream hadn’t known. George might not be good at expressing things through words (at least not the things that matter), but the case he hides his feelings in is made of glass. If things had been clear as day back then, they were spelled out in big letters now. There’s no way Dream didn’t know how George felt. Maybe that’s why he had been so patient with George saying it out loud: because actions speak louder than words.

George almost forgets about why he’s there. He almost spirals into another conversation about how much he adores Dream and what makes Dream the boy he sees his forever with.

He probably should’ve.

“Why’d you call me over?”

He turns a bit so that he can give Sapnap his undivided attention. He’s here for his friend, not himself, so the spiel about how he’s got the best boyfriend in the world can wait. Sapnap’s face falls when George looks him in the eye and he shakily averts his gaze. It’s like the look that George gives him unintentionally prompts responsibility and Sapnap’s discomfort arises from that.

The city is quiet for a Friday evening. It makes that aforementioned dread all the more noticeable. George scratches at his arm, chasing after a sudden itch that won’t go away.

“George.”

Sapnap trails off, tongue rolling past his stubborn lips. George doesn’t like when his name is said like that: heavy, reluctant, pitiful. He’s heard it one too many times to not know how much chaos will follow. He feels uneasy, palms growing sweaty and movements getting jittery at record speed. For as long as George has known Sapnap, even if it hasn’t been that long, Sapnap has never done George any wrong. So, as much as George doesn’t want to believe the next words that come out of Sapnap’s mouth, he has to.

“There’s something you have to see. It’s- it’s about Dream.”

George doesn't want to know.

He wants to remain blissfully ignorant to whatever Sapnap is trying to tell him. Is that foolish of him? Selfish? To want to remain happy in a world that shields him from everything that might hurt him, regardless of how important it may be? After years of hurting, can't he just keep his happy ending?

George needs to know.

"Is it something bad?" George asks carefully. Sapnap doesn't reply, only searches for something in his pocket, and it makes George even more nervous. He laughs to cope, "Sapnap, you're scaring me."

Another dismissive glance and a half-assed smile. Sapnap doesn't bother hiding the severity of the situation anymore. He opens his phone hastily, pulls up his messages, and expands something for George to see. The phone gets dropped into George's hands and a video starts playing.

"You're crazy, dude," Punz says in shock, taking a swig of his beer. "Hottest, most unattainable person on campus and you dump her?"

"She was a bitch," Dream laughs, the blunt sitting between his lips bopping as he speaks. "Besides, I'm pretty hot and unattainable myself."

There's a loud round of applause to accompany the cheers and laughter in the room. Puffy, who's sitting next to Dream, steals the blunt from him and sends him a motherly glare. Dream squints right back playfully, nudging her shoulder with his.

"Maybe she was the hottest," Puffy shrugs. "Not the most unattainable though."

Everyone in the small circle leans forward, expecting her to elaborate, and she raises her eyebrows, mirroring their surprise.

“What?” Puffy asks with a soft laugh. “You guys have to know who I’m talking about.”

The group starts listing random names. Each one prompts offhand comments of agreement or disagreement. A few dozen guesses get tossed, but none of them come close to getting a sign of approval from Puffy. Puffy’s disinterest in the conversation grows and grows, showing that they’re getting further and further away from who she’s trying to hint at.

“Is it George?” Wilbur suddenly says from across the room, drumming his pen against his lap. The smoke that he breathes out makes it hard to see his face, so it’s unclear whether he’s joking or not, but either way, that seems to be the name Puffy was waiting for.

“Yes!” She exclaims, sitting up and pointing across the room at Wilbur as if they’ve connected on a deeper level.

“George?” Dream repeats, sitting up as well and giving Puffy a confused look. “How?”

“You’re kidding,” Puffy says in disbelief, smacking Dream’s back lightly as if to knock some sense into him. “We’ve known him for so long and has he ever dated anyone? Shown interest in anyone? People are all over him, but he’s never gone on a date, right?”

“Yeah, but that doesn’t mean-”

“Holy shit, they’re right,” Alyssa pipes in after swallowing the brownie she’s lazily been chewing on this entire time. “Dating George? Now that’s a fucking flex.”

The group seems to come to an unanimous agreement, humming along to whatever comments follow. Dream frowns, the corners of his lips twitching downwards. There’s something he wants to say, but he’s not sure how to say it and if he should.

“Seems impossible. I bet that even Dream wouldn’t be able to do it,” Punz sneers, spinning his empty beer bottle on the ground in front of him.

It comically lands on Dream and the laughter in the room gets louder. Dream’s frown shifts from uncertainty to mild irritation.

“Oh, sure,” Dream scoffs, swiftly popping open the two upper most buttons of his shirt. “It’s not like he’s spreading his legs for me every night or anything.”

Sarcastic whistles drown out laughter and mocking praises are tossed Dream’s way. Even Callahan joins in on the teasing. Nobody sounds impressed; nobody equates sex as an achievement. Dream feels a bit ridiculous and the regret on his face shows that he understands why they’re making fun of him, but it annoys him nonetheless. His eyes narrow and his jaw clenches.

“Fucking is one thing. Dating is another,” Wilbur explains for the rest of the group, leaving his corner of the room to stand in front of Dream. “Wanna humor me with a challenge, Dream?”

Dream stands up slowly, untrusting of the dark glint in Wilbur’s eyes. “What’s the challenge?”

“If you can get George to date you within a month, I’ll let you feature in my new song and you can say whatever the fuck you wanna say,” Wilbur offers. It sounds too good to not come with a risky price and sure enough, his grin turns from friendly to wolfish. “If you take even a day longer, you have to introduce me to him.”

Wilbur sticks his hand out and Dream scoffs, shaking it without any hesitation. “Deal.”

“Hope he likes musicians.”

George hands Sapnap back his phone.

He doesn’t know what to make of the video. What is he meant to feel? Nothing good, he reckons. How could he? After finding out that dating him was nothing but a challenge.

The happiness that was blossoming inside of him wilts. Emptiness returns to fill in the hollow shell that George becomes; it’s a different kind of emptiness though. He feels a lot more alone this time around. A lot less sure of where he stands and where Dream stands.

Even with the evidence shown to him, George finds a hard time believing that the past six months have been nothing but for show. Dream is a good actor, but is he that good of an actor? At first, George had thought so. Then, he had thought the opposite. Now he's stuck in a limbo. The best thing to do would be to just ask him, but George can't do that. He can barely comprehend his own thoughts, there's no way he would be able to handle a confrontation. What he needs is to sit down, clear his mind, and come back to this at a later time. He needs to pretend that everything's okay until he can admit that it isn't.

He needs a distraction.

"Baby, what's the rush?" Dream laughs, carefully sliding his jacket off to calm George's insistent tugs. "Something got you worked up?"

George nods instead of being honest, letting Dream speculate as he pleases. Whatever will get him out of his work clothes and inside George sooner. George knows he should give it a rest and try something else to deal with the ridges that have appeared on his forehead. This method has proved to be an unhealthy way of coping several times too many for George to rely on it so heavily.

However, George doesn't know any other forms of distraction. Or at least any that work. He can try to forget about Dream, but his mind will find a way to circle back to him. Everything, no matter how peculiar, always reminds him of Dream. He's spent too many years treating Dream as the center of his universe as well as all the stars. Considering that George can barely remember his life before loving Dream, reverting back to that state is going to be way too hard and take way too much time.

George needs a distraction now. Not later.

"Weren't you just at Sappap's?" Dream asks, arms flexing as he yanks his shirt off. George stares at the apple ponytail on the top of his head as it bobs."What did you do, naughty little thing?"

George wishes the questions would stop.

He's got questions of his own to ask. Questions that are demanding of answers that might tear them apart for a long time. He would rather forget about both their questions.

He doesn't know if he wants to hear the answers even if that's dangerous. He knows his mind will work against him and unconsciously create answers of its own if he's too afraid to ask Dream for them. George finds hilarity in that since he can't even answer the questions he has for himself.

Why did you fall for him?

"Thinking," George mumbles, letting Dream help him out of his jeans. "About you."

That's not a lie. The way Dream interprets it makes it sound like a lie, but George had never implied it one way or another.

"Yeah?" Dream barks out a laugh, standing up straight and running his fingers through George's hair. The way he smiles at George makes George's stomach churn. What could once be so easily mistaken as love is now so hard to grasp. "I'm always thinking about you too."

Dream talks too much. George shuts him up with his lips. He doesn't want words to ruin what they have right now. Words always ruin everything. George wants them to remain silent, to pretend like what happened in the past never happened, to take things slow and just focus on *them* right now.

Because even if it's as fake as everything that's led up to this moment, at least he can break his fall with this memory. It's a flimsy bandaid, but it still works enough to help him forget that he's bleeding.

Every time Dream tries to pull away, George chases after him, refusing to let up. Gasps of air are the only things Dream can manage until both of them are naked and their impatience is too high up not to come down. Dream takes the hint that George wants him to do something and not say something, so when they stop bruising each other's lips, Dream attaches his to George's neck.

George sighs softly, granting himself permission to enjoy the gentle kisses being stamped onto his skin. His fingers yank at the rubberband in Dream's hair, letting his fringe fall and tickle George's shoulder. It's long—long enough that if George looks down, he won't have to meet Dream's gaze.

Because if Dream can unravel George with just his hands, he can undo him with just his eyes.

Their movements are rushed and sloppy, contradicting the calculated kisses Dream leaves on George's body. Long fingers work hastily at opening George up and George bounces on them with a desperation that has yet to be quenched. Dream mutters something for the first time since George silenced him.

He calls George pretty. George hates it.

"Fuck," Dream curses softly as George's addictive heat engulfs him. The first thrust inside is always the most heavenly. "Still so tight, doll."

George moans and hooks his arms underneath his knees, staring up at Dream expectantly. Dream gives him what he wants. He places his big hands onto the back of George's milky thighs and pushes until George is bent in half, exposed for Dream to do as he pleases.

It's a little uncomfortable. George has never been the most flexible. But it's hot and George prefers it like this; it makes him feel used—not loved. It reminds him of his place.

And yet, when they're both riding on mutual ecstasy, he still needs Dream to say it. He needs Dream to say those three words in order for him to release. He's gotten too used to hearing them.

"Tell me you love me," he begs. *Even if you don't mean it.*

Dream pulls George closer, moves the brunet's legs up until they're hooked over broad shoulders, and then leans down. His face is mere inches away from George's and there's a fond smile plastered on his lips. Dream slows down the pace of his thrusts, prioritizing accuracy and strength.

It's too intimate like this.

"I love you," Dream whispers and George mewls at how deep Dream reaches inside of him. "I love you. I'll say it however many times you want me to."

George sighs, looking up into Dream's eyes and trying to find any confirmation or denial of his suspicions. Dream stares back at him, more hard to read than ever before.

But will you mean it?

“Baby?” Dream calls out tiredly. George hears him feel around the bed before opening his eyes. “Where are you going?”

It’s late at night. George is heading home like he used to. He tosses on his jacket and stands up off the bed.

“Back to my dorm,” George answers, grabbing his things from the bedside drawer.

“Why?” Dream makes a face at him, bleary eyes barely able to focus on George’s blurred face in the dark. George doesn’t reply, stuffing his pockets with his wallet and his keys, and Dream sits up in a sudden panic. “Wait, baby- why? What’s wrong?”

George stills, turning to face Dream and Dream makes quick work of getting out of bed. Large palms reach out and cup George’s cheeks and gentle thumbs brush carefully over fading tear stains. Dream steps forward and pushes them into the single stream of moonlight that peeks in through the tiny gap between their curtains. In it, George’s rosy rimmed eyes and wet lashes say everything that he can’t.

Dream’s voice cracks when he calls out for his trophy-case lover, fear practiced well enough to beguile George if he didn’t already know the truth. “Baby?”

George cuts in, gently pushing Dream away before the lies can warp their way around his head again. “I just want to go home.”

Dream freezes, hands suspended in the air awkwardly, “Oh. Okay, I’ll- I’ll walk you back then. Let me grab my jacket.”

George shakes his head, walking out the room without looking back. Dream is quick to follow him, grabbing his keys frantically and not bothering to even put on a shirt. George ignores him, slipping into his shoes and tying them at record speed.

It's only when Dream goes to do the same that George speaks again, "Clay, just- stop. I'll walk back alone."

"You hate walking alone at night," Dream frowns.

"And yet I always had to," George scoffs, tilting his head back. He manages to catch the hurt that surfaces on Dream's face for a split second. "I'll be fine."

The doorknob feels cold against George's skin. Foreign, just like Dream's touch. Both send chills down George's back, rewriting fond memories in completely different connotations. George looks over Dream's shoulder; the colors run away from his line of sight. Nothing is vibrant anymore and the bland, dull hues blend with similar shades in his heart.

George opens the door and steps outside. Dream tries to follow him, disregarding the bitter welcome of winter's midnight and bracing himself for the cold. It's absurd. Dream's act is so well-rehearsed, George is astonished. He places his palm flat against Dream's bare chest and shoves him back into his apartment.

"I do like musicians, by the way."

"You have to stop moping over him," Karl says, pulling out what seems like their hundredth box of tissues this week.

George doesn't cry easily and yet Dream knows exactly which strings to pull for that as well. It's ironic and leaves George feeling even more confused as to why he ever fell for the boy with the pretty smile in the first place.

"I think you should talk to him," Alex shrugs, offering George his bag of chips.

George stuffs his hand into the bag and pulls one cheeto out, popping it into his mouth and chewing obnoxiously loud in a futile attempt to lighten up the mood. "I thought you were against me liking him. Shouldn't you be happy?"

Karl and Alex share a glance. George feels a little left out, but he doesn't have to pry because Alex ends up answering his question, indirectly explaining what the look was for.

"Yeah, I was," Alex admits, rolling his tongue over his lips. "Until you guys actually started dating."

George laughs at that and it sounds empty and forced.

They never 'actually started dating'. All they did was extend what they already had. Dream tore up their old contract only to make a new one without George's permission. George wants to be angry at him for that, but he knows that even if Dream had done it with his knowledge, he would still be experiencing this heartache because he still would've gone along with it. So, while he wants to believe that he's upset at Dream for using him again, he knows that he's only upset Dream didn't ask him first.

"I'm serious," Alex laughs as well, also sounding in disbelief of the words that are leaving his own mouth. "Dude, he- I didn't think it was possible, but he is more whipped than you will *ever* be."

"That's not true," George mumbles, playing with the strings of his hoodie. It's not really his hoodie. It's a spare from Dream's closet that he's kept for years.

"I'm so annoyed," Dream grunted, voice muffled into the pillows that he was lying his head on. Their video call reached the 4 hour mark just as Dream's screen paused. "I must've forgotten it in the locker room, let me text Punz."

"It's just a hoodie" George replied, tugging his covers up to his chin. The light coming from his phone was the only thing illuminating his dark room and it was beginning to hurt his eyes. "I need to hang up soon."

“My favorite one!” Dream argued with a soft whine, returning to the facetime call so that George would have his undivided attention for the last few minutes. “The green is all worn out from how much I’ve worn it.”

George’s eyes travelled down, lips forming a small ‘o’. It all made sense now.

“I think,” George chuckled as he sat up, turning around to prop his phone on the pillows. Once the camera was set up, he moved back and rested his weight on his knees. “I think you left it here.”

It had been hanging untouched on his headboard and George thought it would work better as a comforter than a dust collector. The night was always hard on him and George decided that wearing whatever was closest to him was the smartest move. Quicker relief.

The hoodie had been noticeably bigger than his other ones. The sleeves covered his hands wholly, the hem tickled the middle of his thighs, and if he tugged the hood up, half his face would disappear behind it. It was very cozy, but clearly not his. George just didn’t give it much of a thought to realize it was the same hoodie Dream had been crying about.

“Are you wearing it?”

George laughed, twisting and turning his upper torso in a half-assed attempt at modeling the hoodie. Dream’s scrutinizing squint was even funnier late at night. Another silent minute of judging glances passed by and then Dream sighed softly, closing his eyes.

“On second thought, it’s just a hoodie. You’re right,” Dream coughed, placing his phone down. George frowned when he saw Dream’s ceiling and his glow-in-the-dark stickers instead of his face. “You should keep it.”

“I didn’t mean to upset you,” George said, scrambling forward to grab his phone.

“No, no, you didn’t!” Dream reassured. The camera shook and soon George was met with wide eyes and cheeks that were tinted red, probably from a brutal night’s breeze. “I uh- I want you to keep it. Keep a part of me, y’know. In case you forget me after high school.”

It’s meant to be a joke because there’s no way George could forget Dream. Not only were they best friends, but they had also made sure to apply to all the same universities.

Both of their laughs sounded more shy than genuine.

“Besides, it looks better on you.”

“George, shut up,” Alex snorts, shoving another chip in George’s face which George begrudgingly opens his mouth to eat. “Are you forgetting the part where he created an elaborate plan to get back at someone on your behalf? A plan that cost him four years of his life he’ll never get back, by the way.”

“Doesn’t mean he didn’t see me as a challenge,” George replies sourly, taking a tissue out of the box to wipe his fingers on. “Did Sapnap send you the video?”

“He did,” Karl says, pulling it up on his phone and skimming to the end where Wilbur and Dream are shaking hands. “I think he was jealous.”

“His ego had a big part in it,” Alex interjects, shaking his finger at Karl. “The jealousy only made it worse.”

George grumbles, staring at the dent on his bed where he lay a few hours ago. If Dream really cared, he would’ve texted him.

(To be fair, he had. Four times. But a fifth time would’ve really sold the case.)

Maybe he’s being childish by not responding, but it’s hard to think of a civil reply to the man who broke his heart. Dream had sent him long paragraphs and George had read through each one many times. Enough for him to have memorized them word for word. The first one was a messy apology, the second one begged George to let him explain, the third had been the explanation, and the fourth had promised to leave George alone. George didn’t know where to begin when drafting his own paragraph and ultimately gave up.

He didn’t want Dream to leave him alone, but he didn’t want to talk to Dream either. He didn’t want to see Dream, but he still missed waking up next to him. To put it shortly, George didn’t know

what he wanted. Up until their split, George would've sworn that all he ever wanted was for Dream to be happy. But things have changed. Now, he doesn't know if that's enough.

After years of helpless pining, it feels too selfish to admit out loud that he wants to be happy too.

"That jealousy has been there forever," Karl mutters, stretching his arms over his head. "Alex, remember when you jokingly asked George to prom and then he gave you a black eye during dodgeball."

"Alex is just bad at sports," George rolls his eyes.

"He *hurled* the ball at my *face*."

"And then went to prom with his girlfriend, so what's your point?" George fires back, narrowing his eyes. His friends were being supportive of the wrong person. Were they *his* best friends or Dream's?

(*"He's my best friend just as much as both of yours, so shut up."*)

"And he fucked you while dating that same girlfriend, so what's *your* point?" Alex scoffs. "I'm telling you, George. That man might have an A+ in stupidity, but he's in love with you."

Karl hums in agreement, "Ditto."

Lethargy catches up to George and he nods curtly just to get the conversation over with. He's too tired to deal with the possibility of Dream actually loving him. That would mean he would have to rewrite his memories all over again and maybe it's worth it, but maybe his roommates are wrong and the only thing George would be rewriting is his heartbreak.

George runs until he can't run anymore. The next semester starts a month after the incident and George quickly realizes that ignoring Dream forever is no longer possible. He takes the most obscure routes to his classes and risks being late only to find out that he shares two of them with Dream. In what world does a political science major have classes that overlap with a computer science major?

It's not that Dream's bothering him, it's that George can't look at his face without regretting walking away from it. George needs to value himself. He can't go running back to someone who sees him as another pretty face.

Dream keeps his promise and stays out of George's way. After two weeks, George figures out that he doesn't have to hurriedly leave class in case Dream tries to talk to him because Dream leaves first. There's a pang in George's chest the first time he sees Dream walk out the room. Initially, he thinks it's because he's longing again, but when he's doing his laundry and he sees that old hoodie on the top of the pile—

George realizes he misses his best friend.

That doesn't mean he doesn't miss the way Dream holds him or the way Dream kisses him or even the way Dream fucks him, but before anything, Dream was his best friend. George doesn't like that there's a rift between him and his best friend. So, George finally decides that he needs to talk to Dream. It's a bit embarrassing to hit him up this late, but now is better than never. At least that's what he thinks until he starts *trying* to talk to Dream.

Dream is running away from him.

George had only been able to avoid Dream this far because Dream had also been trying to avoid him. Every time George tries to walk up to him before or after class, Dream rushes to appear busy or drags the person closest to him into a conversation. When he texts or calls Dream, Dream doesn't answer and when George tries to reach him on other social media platforms, Dream's profiles are deactivated. Even his discord account is gone.

George doesn't understand why Dream is being so dramatic over a stupid bet or challenge or whatever it is.

Oh.

Way to call himself a hypocrite. George groans, banging his head against the steering wheel he's sat in front of. His car makes a pathetic honk in response and George rolls his eyes, "Tell me about it."

Maybe he *had* overreacted. Just a little bit. He thinks he was allowed to feel hurt in that situation, but perhaps he could have handled it somewhat better. He's never been the best at being mature and making good decisions. That irresponsibility only shoots up when he's clouded with emotions because he's not *used* to.. *feeling*. As irritatingly edgy as that sounds. Dream's usually the one to calm him down and help him to think rationally. Much like how George is usually the one that prevents Dream from acting on his impulses. So without each other, of *course* they're not going to get anywhere.

God, how could George have been so blind?

Speaking of blind, he seems to also be blind to his surroundings. He forgets that the reason his car squeaks is because it's on and he's *driving* for Christ's sake. He's driving back home from the grocery store and yes, driving requires less focus after practice, but George is *not* a good driver and needs to use all the focus that he has. He obtained his license after his fifth time taking the test and the instructor had seemed painfully reluctant to pass him.

Right as he shoots his head up to make sure he doesn't hit anyone. He *hits* someone. Thankfully, he's in a quiet neighborhood and moving at a snail's pace, but he still jumps out of the car like he's accidentally murdered someone in broad daylight. (It's five in the evening.)

"Oh my god," he cries out, rushing to the front of the car to inspect his victim. "Are you- Dream?"

Sitting on the road right in front of George's car with a hand on his hip is the same boy that indirectly caused George to drive unsafe in the first place. Thankfully, he doesn't look seriously injured, but he still winces when he stands up and George feels a guilty rage inside of him.

But only half of it is from nearly running Dream over.

"Yes, I'm Dream," the blond scoffs, finding time to crack a joke even during a moment like this. "What smartass thought it was a good idea to give *you* a license?"

George laughs, feeling ill at ease. He's not sure why Dream is hopping into their old dynamics like both of them haven't spent the last month unintentionally competing against each other to see who

could hurt the other more. He decides less harm will come from going along with it though.

“I’m an excellent driver! You were jaywalking,” George says, matter-of-factly. “That’s illegal in California, you know. Alex told me.”

Dream snorts, reaching over to flick George square on the forehead. “Well, thank God I didn’t somehow wake up in California today then, lucky me.”

It’s comforting. This mood that they’ve created and the conversation that they’re having. Everything feels like it should be and George almost doesn’t want to apologize in case it ruins the flow of things. He knows he needs to though. If he wants a chance at making this feeling of serenity last, then he needs to trade in a few minutes of awkward tension.

Right as he musters up the courage to bring up the subject, Dream stops him. George frowns at the hand that’s blatantly shoved into his face and he’s about to ask what he did wrong when Dream rushes past him.

Tires squeak and George’s jaw falls open.

“You put it in reverse instead of park!”

George thinks that maybe he should just leave the driving to everyone else. Why does he live in the city if he’s not going to utilize the busses and trains supplied to him for his convenience?

Dream motions with two fingers for George to come over and George hesitantly heads towards the passenger’s side. He’d rather have Dream behind the wheel than himself and Dream knows that which is why he already has his seatbelt strapped in by the time George gets back into the car. They sit in silence as George fixes his own seat belt. Dream tosses one quick glance at George’s GPS, adjusts the driver’s seat to accommodate his long legs, and nudges the gear lever into drive.

This is a lot more awkward than George had signed up for. He starts to rethink his bargain. Is a 50% chance at happiness really worth this level of humiliation?

“What are you frowning at? You look like you’re planning to set something on fire.”

Yeah, myself. George drags his palms down his face and then groans.

“Dream- Clay, I’m-” George grimaces, curling his hands into small fists before biting the bullet. “I’m sorry.”

Silence. Pure silence except for the wind that blares in through the open windows. Not the good kind of silence either, but the weird silence where they steal glances at each other and spend minutes trying to decipher what each glance tells them.

“It’s fine,” Dream says after some thought and George frowns at the bland response. That is until Dream continues, “I won’t press charges for a bruised hip.”

“No, that’s not what I- wait, your hip is bruised?” George asks in surprise. Before he can stop himself, he’s reaching over and yanking Dream’s shirt up to inspect the wound and there’s nothing there. “Oh you’re such a dickhead.”

Dream grins and he misses the way George rolls his eyes because he remains focused on the road. George could really learn a thing or two from him. Maybe if they make up, he can force Dream to teach him how to drive properly.

“You’re right. I am a dickhead. A dickhead that hopefully someone as kind and beautiful and sweet and amazing as you is willing to give a second chance to.”

Another silence. This is in no way how George had been picturing their long awaited conversation to go. He was expecting tears outside of one of their doors and a bit of yelling, maybe even shoving. Not a car ride where they both take turns saying something and introduce pregnant pauses in between. At the same time, it feels weird enough to feel *right*.

“I’ve given you a second chance already,” George gibes. “This is like your three thousandth and twenty-third chance.”

“Okay well, do you want me to say the whole thing again and substitute that number in or,” Dream asks with a feigned look of concern and George shoves him.

“Oh, shut up.”

Dream swerves the car just to be annoying, “Hey! We don’t want to run another person over today, do we?”

The streets are relatively empty which is unusual for the hour, but George is grateful that they are. It makes it easier for him to force Dream to pullover so that they can properly talk because he really doesn’t feel like having this conversation with Dream’s cherry earring. They’re cute, cute enough for George to consider stealing them, but George needs to look at *Dream* right now.

Dream parks neatly on a street leading into a dead end. It’s dimly lit and won’t draw any attention to two boys having a heart-to-heart in an old Ford.

“So,” George starts and Dream mimics him (as if things aren’t awkward enough). “I wanted to.. uh. I wanted to apologize for how I reacted.”

Dream’s seat squeaks when he tries to turn his torso so that he’s fully facing George and George bites back a nervous laugh.

“I overreacted, but it’s because it was so sudden,” George explains, fiddling with his thumbs. Maybe he should’ve stayed staring at Dream’s earring. “I guess I was upset you didn’t tell me about it sooner. I would’ve understood.”

“I meant to,” Dream rushes to say, muscle memory kicking in and causing his hand to reach over. He catches himself right before it makes contact with George’s thigh and then pulls it back, snapping his fingers to play off what just happened. “I knew you would understand, but I was still scared. I’m sorry I took so long when I was the one that didn’t understand- I didn’t understand myself.”

George smiles to himself. That phrase undoubtedly resonates with him.

“I figured I was just really jealous even though I had no right to be,” Dream rolls his tongue past his lips. “You weren’t mine. No matter how much I wanted that to be true.”

George laughs at that and as soon as he hears himself, his hand slaps over his mouth. This time he earns the silent stare that Dream gives him. George didn’t mean to burst into laughter, but the thought of him being anyone but Dream’s is just so unrealistic considering he has devoted basically his entire life to the idiot sat before him.

“Oh my god, I’m sorry,” George says through the gaps of his fingers, lips squished against his palm. “It’s just that- well, I’ve always been yours.”

The confession burns permanent red scars onto George’s cheeks, but Dream’s smile proves worth it. It’s bright, reaching his eyes and making them crease at the corners, and also timid, little fangs poking into the corners of his lower lip. George finds himself smiling back, one hand leaving his lap to cup Dream’s cheek. The way Dream leans into his touch makes George yearn to hold him close again.

“I didn’t want Wilbur to have you. I didn’t want anyone else to have you,” Dream confesses, covering George’s hand with his own and wedging his fingers in between the gaps. “You might not believe me- I didn’t even believe myself for a while, but- I’ve loved you for a long time. I can’t- I can’t pinpoint not feeling like this around you.”

George smiles, leaning in to brush their noses together, “Like this?”

“Yeah,” Dream replies, gaze flickering down to George’s lips and then back up to the amber eyes that silently dote on him. “Dude, my heart’s racing fast as fuck. I’m feeling like the Flash or something.”

“You’re such an idiot,” George rolls his eyes, stealing a kiss off of Dream’s subtly puckered lips. “*Dude.*”

Dream grins and closes the gap between them again. Their lips mold together softly, reminding each other of the euphoria that arises when they meet. A familiar rhythm is settled and their hands shift to places they’ve stamped their claim on. George’s curl over Dream’s shoulders and Dream’s slide down to George’s waist. It’s a little uncomfortable for George to stretch over the divider like this, but he cares more about drowning himself in Dream’s taste than the gear shift prodding into his lower stomach.

Dream’s priorities are reversed, “Come here.”

With a swift movement of his hand, Dream’s car seat jolts back and Dream helps George climb over onto his lap. George nearly bumps his head against the roof of the car, causing an eruption of quiet giggles. By now, the sun has set and the fiery orange of the sky is replaced by a cool twilight. While the golden hour suits Dream the most, the night suits George the most. Moonlight kisses George’s complexion, making him glow brighter. Bright enough to blind Dream if it weren’t for

those rose-tinted glasses of his.

“I love you,” George whispers, staring down at Dream with a silly grin on his face.

Dream looks just as love-stricken, “I love you too.”

George wiggles a hand behind him and feels around for the switches on the side of the wheel. He twists one experimentally and the headlights turn off, leaving them better hidden. Dream laughs, almost in disbelief at George’s coy behavior, and George raises an eyebrow at him.

“I have another challenge for you. Prove it.”

End Notes

Happy birthday from me to you guys!

Rushed to upload this on my birthday haha. Wanted to give you guys a treat. :) Hope you guys like it!

I've been meaning to upload more one-shots but every time I write something, it ends up being longer than planned. This was supposed to be under 10k words... imagine.

Hope you all have been well!

Feel free to hit me up on [twitter](#) if you'd like to chat.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!